HISTORY OF CIVILIZATIONS OF CENTRAL ASIA

Volume II

The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250



UNESCO Publishing

Contents

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Volume II

Editor: János Harmatta
Co-editors: B. N. Puri and G. F. Etemadi

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PREFACE

Federico Mayor
Director-General of UNESCO

One of the purposes of UNESCO, as proclaimed in its Constitution, is 'to develop and to increase the means of communication between... peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives'. The *History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind*, published in 1968, was a major early response on the part of UNESCO to the task of enabling the peoples of the world to have a keener sense of their collective destiny by highlighting their individual contributions to the history of humanity. This universal history – itself now undergoing a fundamental revision – has been followed by a number of regional projects, including the *General History of Africa* and the planned volumes on Latin America, the Caribbean and on aspects of Islamic culture. The *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* is an integral part of this wider enterprise.

It is appropriate that the second of UNESCO's regional histories should be concerned with Central Asia. For, like Africa, Central Asia is a region whose cultural heritage has tended to be excluded from the main focus of historical attention. Yet from time immemorial the area has served as the generator of population movements within the Eurasian land-mass. The history of the ancient and medieval worlds, in particular, was shaped to an important extent by the succession of peoples that arose out of the steppe, desert, oases and mountain ranges of this vast area extending from the Caspian Sea to the high plateaux of Mongolia. From the Cimmerians mentioned in Homer's *Odyssey*, the Scythians described by Herodotus, the Hsiung-nu whose incursions led the emperors of China to build the Great Wall, the sixth-century Türks who extended their empire to the boundaries of Byzantium, the Khitans who gave their name to ancient Cathay, through to the Mongols who erupted into world history in the thirteenth century under Genghis Khan, the nomadic horsemen of Central Asia helped to define the limits and test the mettle of the great civilizations of Europe and Asia.

Nor is it sufficient to identify the peoples of Central Asia simply with nomadic cultures. This is to ignore the complex symbiosis within Central Asia itself between nomadism and settlement, between pastoralists and agriculturalists. It is to overlook above all the burgeoning of the great cities of Central Asia such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, which established themselves in the late Middle Ages as outstanding centres of intellectual inquiry and artistic creation. The seminal writings of the philosopher-scientist Avicenna (a native of Bukhara) and the timeless masterpieces of Timurid architecture epitomize the flowering of medieval culture in the steppes and deserts of Central Asia.

The civilizations of Central Asia did not, of course, develop in a vacuum. The impact of Islam was pervasive and fundamental. The great civilizations on the periphery of the Eurasian continent likewise exerted an important influence on these lands. For some 1,500 years this arid inland sea – far removed from the earth's true oceans – was crucial as the route along which merchandise (notably silk) and ideas flowed between China, India, Iran and Europe. The influence of Iran – although the core of its civilization lies in South-West Asia – was particularly strong, to the extent that it is sometimes difficult to establish a clear boundary between the civilization of the Iranian motherland and that of the outlying lands of Central Asia.

To the rich variety of peoples of Central Asia was thus added a multiplicity of external influences. For century after century, the region experienced the influx of foreign art and ideas, colliding and merging with the indigenous patterns of Central Asia. Migrations and the recurrent shock of military invasion, mingling and displacing peoples and cultures, combined to maintain the vast region in flux.

The systole and diastole of population movements down the ages add to the difficulty of delimiting a region whose topology alone does not prescribe clear boundaries. Thus, when, at the nineteenth session of its General Conference, UNESCO decided to embark on a *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* the first problem to be resolved was to define the scope of the region concerned. Subsequently, at a UNESCO meeting held in 1978, it was agreed that the study on Central Asia should deal with the civilizations of Afghanistan, north-eastern Iran, Pakistan, northern India, western China, Mongolia and the former Soviet Central Asian republics. The appellation 'Central Asia', as employed in this *History*, refers to this area, which corresponds to a clearly discernible cultural and historical reality.

UNESCO's call to specialists, and particularly to scholars native to the region, to participate in the undertaking met with a wide and generous response. The project was deemed by academics to be an excellent opportunity to draw back the curtain that had veiled Central Asia for so long. However, none were in any doubt as to the huge dimensions of the task.

An ad hoc International Scientific Committee was formed in 1980 to plan and prepare the work, which it was agreed should cover, in six volumes, the history of Central Asia from earliest times to the present day. The Committee's initial task was to decide where pre-eminence should be given in the very wide canvas before it. In due course, a proper balance was struck and teams of editors and authors were selected.

The preparation of the *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* is now well advanced. The best resources of research and archaeology have been used to make the work as thorough as possible, and countless annals consulted in major centres throughout the region. It is my sincere wish that this, the third volume, and those that follow will bring instruction and pleasure to readers all over the world.

It remains for me to thank the President, Rapporteur and members of the International Scientific Committee, and the editors, authors and teams of specialists who have collaborated to shed new light on Central Asia with this detailed account of its vital and stirring past. I am sure it will prove a notable contribution to the study and mutual appreciation of the cultures that are the common heritage of mankind.



DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Mohammad S. Asimov

THE General Conference of UNESCO, at its nineteenth session (Nairobi, October, November 1976), adopted the resolution which authorized the Director-General to undertake, among other activities aimed at promoting appreciation and respect for cultural identity, a new project on the preparation of a *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*. This project was a natural consequence of a pilot project on the study of Central Asia which was approved during the fourteenth session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 1966.

The purpose of this pilot project, as it was formulated in the UNESCO programme, was to make better known the civilizations of the peoples living in the regions of Central Asia through studies of their archaeology, history, languages and literature. At its initial stage, the participating Member States included Afghanistan, India, Iran, Pakistan and the former Soviet Union. Later, Mongolia and China joined the UNESCO Central Asian project, thus enlarging the area to cover the cultures of Mongolia and the western regions of China.

In this work, Central Asia should be understood as a cultural entity developed in the course of the long history of civilizations of peoples of the region and the above delimitation should not be taken as rigid boundaries either now or in the future.

In the absence of any existing survey of such large scope which could have served as a model, UNESCO has had to proceed by stages in this difficult task of presenting an integrated narrative of complex historical events from earliest times to the present day.

The first stage was designed to obtain better knowledge of the civilizations of Central Asia by encouraging archaeological and historical research and the study of literature and the history of science. A new project was therefore launched to promote studies in five major domains: the archaeology and the history of the Kushan Empire, the history of the arts of Central Asia, the contribution of the peoples of Central Asia to the development of science, the history of ideas and philosophy, and the literatures of Central Asia.

An International Association for the Study of Cultures of Central Asia (IASCCA), a non-governmental scholarly organization, was founded on the initiative of the Tajik scholar

B. Gafurov in 1973, assembling scholars of the area for the co-ordination of interdisciplinary studies of their own cultures and the promotion of regional and international co-operation.

Created under the auspices of UNESCO, the new Association became, from the very beginning of its activity, the principal consultative body of UNESCO in the implementation of its programme on the study of Central Asian cultures and the preparation of a *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*.

The second stage concentrated on the modern aspects of Central Asian civilizations and the eastward extension of the geographical boundaries of research in the new programme. A series of international scholarly conferences and symposia were organized in the countries of the area to promote studies on Central Asian cultures.

Two meetings of experts, held in 1978 and 1979 at UNESCO Headquarters, concluded that the project launched in 1967 for the study of cultures of Central Asia had led to considerable progress in research and contributed to strengthening existing institutions in the countries of the region. The experts consequently advised the Secretariat on the methodology and the preparation of the *History*. On the basis of its recommendations it was decided that this publication should consist of six volumes covering chronologically the whole history of Central Asian civilizations ranging from their very inception up to the present. Furthermore, the experts recommended that the experience acquired by UNESCO during the preparation of the *History of Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind* and of the *General History of Africa* should also be taken into account by those responsible for the drafting of the *History*. As to its presentation, they supported the opinion expressed by the UNESCO Secretariat that the publication, while being a scholarly work, should be accessible to a general readership.

Since history constitutes an uninterrupted sequence of events, it was decided not to give undue emphasis to any specific date. Events preceding or subsequent to those indicated here are dealt with in each volume whenever their inclusion is justified by the requirements of scholarship.

The third and final stage consisted of setting up in August 1980 an International Scientific Committee of nineteen members, who sit in a personal capacity, to take reponsibility for the preparation of the *History*. The Committee thus created included two scholars from each of the seven Central Asian countries – Afghanistan, China, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Mongolia and the former USSR – and five experts from other countries – Hungary, Japan, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The Committee's first session was held at UNESCO Headquarters in December 1980. Real work on the preparation of the publication of the *History of Civilizations of Central*

Asia started, in fact, in 1981. It was decided that scholars selected by virtue of their qualifications and achievements relating to Central Asian history and culture should ensure the objective presentation, and also the high scientific and intellectual standard, of this *History*.

Members of the International Scientific Committee decided that the new project should correspond to the noble aims and principles of UNESCO and thereby should contribute to the promotion of mutual understanding and peace between nations. The Committee followed the recommendation of the experts delineating for the purpose of this work the geographical area of Central Asia to reflect the common historical and cultural experience.

The first session of the International Committee decided most of the principal matters concerning the implementation of this complex project, beginning with the drafting of plans and defining the objectives and methods of work of the Committee itself.

The Bureau of the International Scientific Committee consists of a president, four vice-presidents and a rapporteur. The Bureau's task is to supervise the execution of the project between the sessions of the International Scientific Committee. The reading committee, consisting of four members, was created in 1986 to revise and finalize the manuscripts after editing Volumes I and II. Another reading committee was constituted in 1989 for Volumes III and IV.

The authors and editors are scholars from the present twelve countries of Central Asia and experts from other regions. Thus, this work is the result of the regional and of the international collaboration of scholars within the framework of the programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The International Scientific Committee and myself express particular gratitude to Mrs Irene Iskender-Mochiri for her arduous and selfless work in preparing the first three volumes for the press.

It is our sincere hope that the publication of the third volume of the *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* will be a further step towards the promotion of the cultural identity of the peoples of Central Asia, strengthening their common cultural heritage and, consequently, will foster a better understanding among the peoples of the world.

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INTRODUCTION

J. Harmatta

VOLUME II of the *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* deals with the historical period from *c*. 700 B.C. to *c*. A.D. 250. This was characterized by the development of the nomadic and sedentary civilizations, created by the Iranian tribes who lived partly in the steppe and wooded-steppe zone, partly in the oasis zone. The ancestors of the Iranians, the Indo-Iranian tribes, had separated from the Proto-Balts and the Proto-Slavs in the fifth millennium B.C., and began to infiltrate the territory of Central Asia during the fourth millennium B.C., but remained in close contact with the Finno-Ugrian tribes, who borrowed a considerable number of important terms from them. Indeed it is from such loan words and linguistic contacts that their migrations can be reconstructed. The first mass migration of the Indo-Iranians during the second millennium B.C. was connected with the rise of animal husbandry, in particular horse-breeding, and with the invention of the two- or four-wheeled vehicle. In their movements towards the Caucasus, the steppes of southern Siberia and Central Asia, they already used the war chariot. As a result they were able to reach Mesopotamia, the Iranian plateau, India, the Altai mountains, and even China and Korea. The second wave of Indo-Iranian migrations was marked by the emergence of the equestrian nomads that gave rise to the ethnic image of Central Asia and led to the formation of the first syncretistic civilizations.

In the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. there were two different zones of civilizations in Central Asia – the northern zone of the Iranian nomads and the southern one of the Iranian husbandmen, who settled on the soil of the oases. This contrast between nomadic tribes and sedentary population has left deep traces in the historical tradition of the Iranians, and was strengthened by the rise of the Achaemenid Empire, which established the Syr Darya as its northern frontier against the nomadic Sakas. South of the river, inside the Achaemenid Empire, the transition from nomadism to agriculture accelerated, and different forms of co-existence between nomads and villages of husbandmen developed. Beyond the empire

the influence of Achaemenid culture in Central Asia spread towards the east as far as the Sakas of the Altai region.

The invasion of Alexander the Great transformed the scene. The nomads were driven back, sedentary civilization was strengthened and, due to the numerous Greek settlements, quickly became predominant. With the rise of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, the civilizations of Central Asia underwent a fundamental change. Greek culture became their constant and essential constituent. It transformed the character of life as well as the mode and conditions of production. Under its influence a new syncretistic civilization came into being, and Greek-influenced art and architecture developed. The use of the Greek script and language spread throughout Bactria; urbanization made rapid progress; houses, public buildings, Greek-type sanctuaries and the pantheon of Greek divinities appeared everywhere in its cities. Greek influence was not confined to Bactria: its general importance is well illustrated by the fact that the Mauryan emperor Aśoka had a Greek translation of his edicts prepared.

The Graeco-Bactrian kings made the first attempt to create a powerful state in Central Asia, which could control the trade routes leading to China, the Indian subcontinent, the Seleucid Empire and the steppes of eastern Europe. They conquered ancient north-western India, extended their power up to the Phryni and the Seres and led military expeditions against the nomads in the north and west. It was in this period that the first objects of Chinese origin reached Central Asia and that the name of the Ts'in dynasty (221–207 B.C.) emerged in the form of Čin among the Iranians. Coming from Central Asia to Iran and India, it furnished the base for the European name of China. The Graeco-Bactrian kingdom played a catalysing role between the cultural goods of distant peoples, and created a syncretistic culture which became the basis of the civilizations of Central Asia up to the Arab conquest.

About 130 B.C. the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom fell to the invasions of the Iranian nomads, the Sacaraucae, Asiani and Tochari. During the second century B.C. the expansion of the nomadic Hsiung-nu Empire led to the migrations of these Iranian nomads, who overthrew the Graeco-Bactrian state and interrupted the commercial relations established by its kings. In the beginning of the first century B.C., however, the Chinese were able to open the Silk Route across the Tarim basin, leading to the intensive caravan trade that developed between China and Central Asia and between Central Asia and its other neighbours.

In the first century B.C. the Sakas established a series of kingdoms in eastern Iran and north-western India; but in the first century A.D., these territories came under the control of the Indo-Parthians, who ruled an empire that stretched from Sistan to the Indus and beyond. Meanwhile to the north of the Hindu Kush mountains the unification of the five Tocharian

tribes under the rule of the Kushans had already begun; and about A.D. 50 their king, Kujula Kadphises, who had made himself master of Bactria, ousted the Indo-Parthians and annexed their Indian provinces. During the second century A.D., his successors, Vima Kadphises and the Great Kushans, ruled the first great empire in Central Asia – an empire that also controlled north-west India as far as Kauśambi and the Indus valley down to the ports of the Arabian Sea. As a result the Kushans were able to establish strong commercial relations with the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire by the maritime routes between north-west India, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf; and with the peoples of the Caucasus and steppes of eastern Europe, by the land routes along the Oxus river and beyond the Caspian Sea.

Consequently, Central Asia played an important intermediary role of world dimensions in the transmission of artefacts, culture and ideas. Chinese silk was sold in Rome. In return Roman gold was exported to north-west India and Central Asia, and provided the precious metal for the superb coinage of the Great Kushans. Parallel with the traffic in commodities cultural exchanges increased. The influence of Graeco-Roman art is to be seen in Central Asia where it was a major factor in the formation of Gandhāran art. The spread of the great religions began with Buddhism, which travelled from India across Central Asia as far as China. The Kushan pantheon, consisting of pre-Zoroastrian, Zoroastrian, Graeco-Roman, Indian Hindu and Buddhist divinities, is a good illustration of the syncretistic civilization of Central Asia at the time. The Kushans, who were themselves of nomadic origin, re-established relations between Central Asia and the northern nomads. They in turn played a more and more considerable role in the formation of the civilizations that subsequently came into being on this territory. Indeed the Kushan synthesis determined the future of the cultures of Central Asia up to and beyond the adoption of Islam.

Traffic along the Silk Route brought quite exceptional prosperity and the Great Kushans tried to exclude their neighbours from this rich transit trade. To establish direct contacts with more distant lands, the states bordering on the Kushan Empire tried to conquer the starting-points or important sections of the Silk Route, and were sometimes successful. About A.D. 234, Sasanian Iran conquered the western provinces of the Kushan Empire up to Sogdiana, Gandhāra and the Indus delta. Somewhat later, around A.D. 270, the Chionites (descendants of the western Hsiung-nu) made themselves masters of K'ang-chü (a nomadic state lying to the north of the Syr Darya) and conquered Sogdiana. Although the Kushan Empire declined, it bequeathed its syncretistic civilization, imbued with Greek culture,

to the Chionites, the Guptas, the Hephthalites and eventually the Türk dynasties which replaced the Hephthalites during the seventh century A.D.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Middle Asia is the territory belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Central Asian republics).

1

ANCIENT IRANIAN NOMADS IN WESTERN CENTRAL ASIA*

A. Abetekov and H. Yusupov

Contents

THE territory of Central Asia, which consists of vast expanses of steppe-land, desert and semi-desert with fine seasonal pastures, was destined by nature for the development of nomadic cattle-breeding. Between the seventh and third centuries B.C. it was inhabited by a large number of tribes, called Scythians by the Greeks, and Sakas by the Persians.

The history of the Central Asian nomads is inseparable from that of the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples of the Eurasian steppe zone. Their political and economic life was closely linked, and their material culture had much in common. It should also be noted that, despite their distinctive qualities, the nomadic tribes were closely connected with the agricultural population of Central Asia. In fact, the history and movements of these nomadic tribes and the settled population cannot be considered in isolation; each had its impact on the other, and this interdependence must be properly understood.

* See Map 1.

Literary sources on the ancient Iranian nomads of Central Asia

The term 'Tūra'[1] is the name by which the Central Asian nomadic tribes were in one of the earliest parts of the *Avesta*. The Tūras are portrayed as enemies of the sedentary Iranians and described, in *Yašt* XVII (prayer to the goddess Aši), 55–6, as possessing fleet-footed horses.[2] As early as 641 or 640 B.C. the nomads were known in Assyrian sources as the Sakas.[3]

Many Greek writers referred to all the nomads of Eurasia, including those of Central Asia, as Scythians; and the Persians designated all the nomadic tribes of the Eurasian steppes, including the Scythians, as the Sakas. These broad classifications were based on the similarity of the culture and way of life of all the nomads who spoke Iranian languages. The question of the actual distribution of the different nomadic tribes or tribal groups is debatable, largely because of the dearth of written sources. Moreover, it is well to remember that nomadic life characteristically entailed frequent migrations, with the result that different tribes successively occupied one and the same territory. When it is considered that these tribes were culturally very close to one another it is easy to understand why classical writers sometimes associated different tribes with the same historical events. For example, in their description of Cyrus' war against the Central Asian nomads, Cyrus fought against the Massagetae according to Herodotus; against the Sakas according to Strabo; against the Abiae according to Quintus Curtius; against the Derbices according to Ctesias; and against the Dahae according to Berossus.

It is now generally agreed that the ancient nomads of Central Asia were descendants of the Bronze Age cattle-breeding tribes who had inhabited the same territory, [4] which does not exclude, however, the probability of considerable ethnic intermingling and movement within and beyond the borders of the region. These trends must have become particularly marked at the start of the first millennium B.C., when a number of tribes changed from cattle-breeding to a purely nomadic way of life.

This view is confirmed by anthropological studies. Between the seventh and fifth centuries B.C., the Sakas of the Aral Sea region seem to have a mixed population, consisting of a Europoid, mainly Andronovo stratum with a significant admixture of Mongoloid

[1] Litvinsky, 1972. p. 156.

[2] The mention of the Tūras‘ fleet-footed horses is possibly a hint at their link with the territory of Turkmenistan, which from time immemorial was famous for its splendid swift horses, the ancestors of the present-day Turkmen breeds (*Istoriya Turkmenskoy SSR*, 1957, p. 104).

[3] Litvinsky, 1972, pp. 156–7.

[4] See Volume I, Chapters 14 and 15.

forms of Central Asian origin. Anthropological materials of the Saka period from eastern Kazakhstan are heterogeneous, showing genetic similarities with the population of the T'ien Shan and the Altai mountains with a Mongoloid admixture already apparent. The Sakas of the eastern Pamirs occupied a place apart, among the other Saka tribes or those akin to them.[5]

The question of the distribution of the Saka tribes is extremely complex. Current literature presents the most varied and contradictory points of view, due principally to the paucity of written sources. The location of the different tribes can only be determined from the extant archaeological data, and any picture of the distribution of the Central Asian tribes belonging to the Saka-Massagetae community remains tentative and incomplete. The Naqsh-i Rustam inscription of Darius I lists three Saka tribal confederations: (a) the *Sakā Haumavargā* in Ferghana, where they began to change over to a settled form of life; (b) the *Sakā Tigraxaudā* in the region beyond the Syr Darya and in Semirechye; and (c) the *Saka tayaiy paradraya* or European Sakas (Scythians). In his list of Darius' satrapies, Herodotus also mentions the Caspians and Sacae as belonging to the fifteenth province. They are usually located along the southern and eastern shores of the Caspian Sea up to the mouth of the now-dried-up Uzboi. It is possible that the Dahae and a number of the other groupings of the Hellenistic period may have derived from the earlier Massagetian Confederation.

No kurgans or burial mounds of the Scythian period (seventh-fifth centuries B.C.) on the Uzboi are known so far, though the association of the Massagetae with the area seems to be well founded.[6] The kurgans that have been investigated (dating from the fourth-second centuries B.C.) show that they are connected with Massagetian tribal groups of a later period, perhaps the Dahae. Their material culture is unquestionably of local origin and contains elements common to the Prokhorovo culture of the lower Volga and Ural regions.

Society and economy of the Iranian nomads of Central Asia

The eighth to sixth centuries B.C. witnessed the development of a class society both among the nomadic tribes and in the settled oases. The development of a specialized nomadic cattle-breeding economy obviously led to major economic and social changes, though the written sources throw little light on the social and economic relationships that existed

[5] Litvinsky, 1972, p. 184.
[6] P'yankov, 1964, 1972; Yusupov, 1976.

among the ancient nomads. The transition to a nomadic way of life in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. occurred at much the same time over the whole of the Central Asian and southern Russian steppes, which were then populated by nomadic tribes showing many similarities in material culture, customs and mores. A nomadic cattle-breeding economy, in which cattle were put to pasture on a succession of different grazing grounds, led to a sharp increase in the number of cattle. This, in turn, led to more tribes shifting to a nomadic way of life. The basis of their prosperity lay in their large herds; horses now began to play a greater role; tribes living on the banks of the rivers engaged in fishing; and skilled craftsmen produced arms, ornaments, sumptuous carpets and other objects.[7] The only indication of the political system of administration operating among the nomads is the mention made of the Saka-Massagetian kings, who were identified with the leaders of the nomadic confederations. The fact that these confederations constituted an organized military force provides justification for speaking of an aristocracy in contrast to the rank-and-file of free nomads.

There may also have been slaves among the nomads, but they clearly did not take any significant part in productive life. The range of grave goods found in barrows also provides evidence for the existence of social differentiation among the Central Asian nomads. In some regions such differences are particularly marked in barrows from the Late Bronze Age, which contained basic types of arms, horse-harness fittings and artefacts typical of the time. Still more striking evidence of social differentiation is to be seen in the very rich mausoleum complexes of leaders – in the Tagisken and Uygarak cemeteries on the lower reaches of the Syr Darya, [8] in the Chilik kurgan, the barrows in central Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and the huge royal sepulchre of Arzhan.[9] Judging from the fact that, during this period, there was a shift from large burial mounds to smaller clusters of kurgans, we may presume that changes of some sort occurred in the family and tribal structure of nomad society.

Most scholars believe that the social organization of the steppe tribes was based on a clan and tribe structure. Based mainly on data in classical authors, this conclusion is confirmed by archaeological material – barrows in the steppe belt are usually sited in separate groups, representing the burial grounds of members of different clans. By this stage, however, the original equality of the steppe societies had already been lost, and there were considerable social and property distinctions.

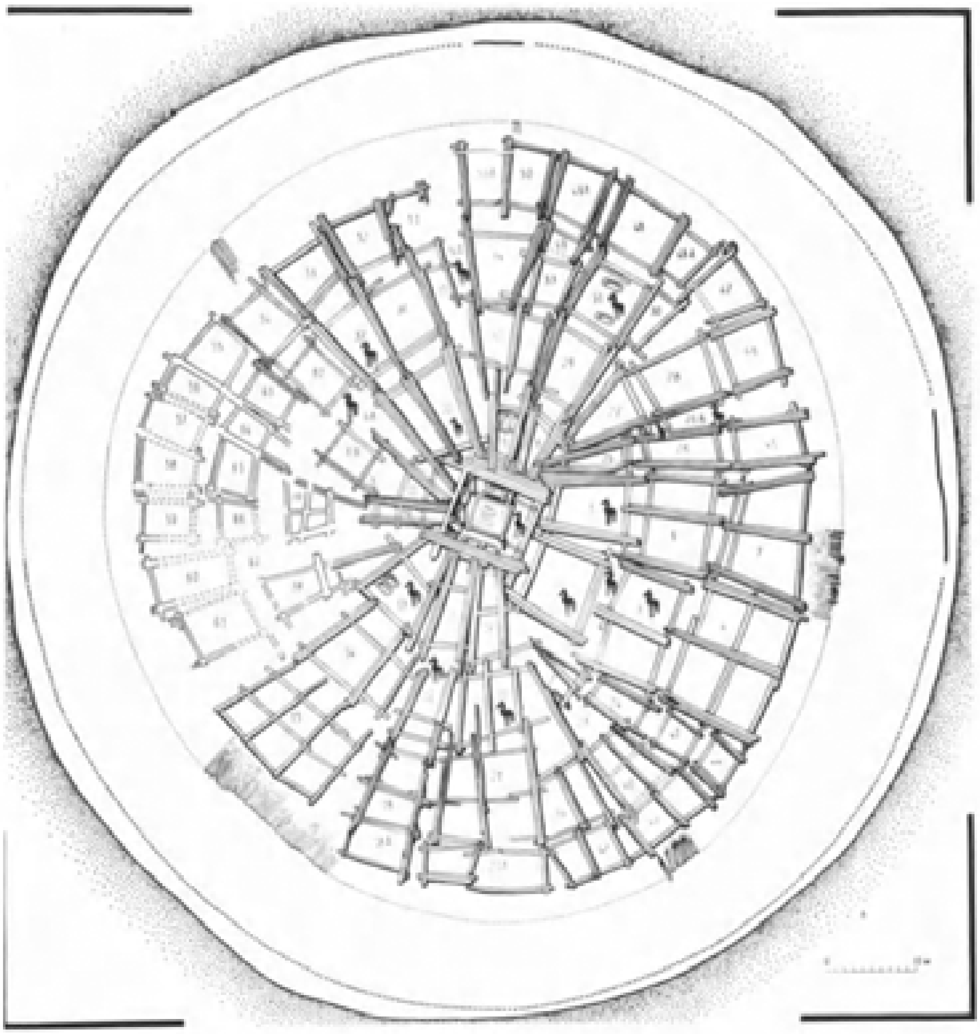
[7] *Istoriya Turkmenskoy SSR*, 1957, p. 69.
[8] Vishnevskaya, 1973; Vishnevskaya and Itina, 1971; Itina, 1981.
[9] Gryaznov, 1975.

The burial complexes of ordinary herdsmen are found under small earthen or stone mounds, whereas grandiose structures, sometimes as high as 20 m, were erected over members of the tribal aristocracy. Complex burial structures have been found in tombs of nobles, with different layouts in different parts of the steppe zone. Among the European Scythians they normally took the form of deep complex catacombs with several chambers. In Semirechye and the Altai regions, the excavated graves of aristocrats contain monumental timber tombs. Thus, in the Besshatîr burial ground in the Ili river valley, log-built burial vaults were found, consisting of three parts: a corridor, an antechamber and the burial chamber proper. The walls rose to a height of 4 m and were built of horizontal trunks of Schrenk spruce, strengthened by timber uprights dug into the ground. [10]

A large number of people must have been employed to erect these complex structures. Obviously the persons buried in them were the chiefs of large tribes or even tribal confederations. The Arzhan tumulus (Fig. 1), already mentioned, is of interest in this connection. Its stone-built mound, 120 m in diameter, covered a timber burial structure consisting of seventy radially arranged chambers. In the central chamber the leader and his close companions were buried, while the other chambers held the remains of representatives of subject tribes and possibly the offerings of friendly tribal groups. Each of the burials was accompanied by many different articles, but a considerable proportion of these were unfortunately plundered in antiquity. It has been calculated that about 160 saddle horses were buried in the kurgan and another 300 horses eaten at the funeral feast.[11]

Social differentiations between steppe tribes of the Scythian period are also mentioned by classical authors. For instance, Lucian states that the Pontic Scythians were divided into a royal clan, *pilophoroi* thought to be members of the military aristocracy or priests and the 'eight-legged ones' – ordinary herdsmen with a pair of oxen and a cart. Some believe that this division corresponds to the division of society into three class or caste groups that characterized all the ancient Indo-Iranians. [12] A similar division can also be traced in the distribution of graves in archaeological sites, for example, in the Saka burial ground at Uygarak on the lower Syr Darya. [13] Classical sources bear witness to the existence of slaves among the Scythians and the use of slave labour in the economy. In the Scythian world, however, slavery did not develop to any considerable extent, remaining mostly domestic and patriarchal, and 'slavery never became widespread among the nomads' as a basis of production.[14] Written sources also suggest that women held a comparatively high position

[10] Akishev and Kushaev, 1963, p. 35.
[11] Gryaznov, 1980.
[12] Grantovskiy, 1960, pp. 14–15.
[13] Vishnevskaya, 1973, pp. 67–8.
[14] Markov, 1976, p. 303.



FLG. 1. Arzhan: plan of a royal tomb.

among the nomadic Saka-Massagetae. For example, Herodotus describes Queen Tomyris as their leader in the war against Cyrus. It is not, however, clear whether a parallel can be drawn in this respect between Saka-Massagetian society and its western neighbour, the matrilineal Sarmatian society.

Culture of the Iranian nomads of Central Asia

Archaeological remains of the first millennium B.C. in the Eurasian steppes have been studied since the nineteenth century. Initially it was thought that this evidence supported the idea, based on an acquaintance with classical tradition, that the whole population of the steppe belt belonged to the same ethnic stock. They seemed to demonstrate cultural uniformity throughout the area. Everywhere burials were found in barrows (kurgans) containing

similar weapons, horse trappings and works of art. The choice of motifs and their style – known as the 'animal style' – pointed to a uniform cultural pattern. All this helped to give rise to the concept of a single Scythian culture, present throughout the Eurasian steppes, which had spread from a single centre and belonged to one tribe or people. This interpretation seemed to be in conformity with the statement of Herodotus (IV.11) that the Pontic Scythians came from Asia. On this evidence, the original homeland, common to all peoples who displayed this culture, should be sought somewhere in the Asian part of the steppe-lands.

Some modern scholars share this point of view and are paying special attention to dating the archaeological remains in various parts of the steppe zone. They hope to find the area where Scythian culture had its origins in those places where the forms of weapons, horse furniture and objects worked in the animal style appeared earliest. It has thus been suggested that one of the earliest complexes of this type is the famous Chilik barrow in eastern Kazakhstan.[15] In recent years the Arzhan barrow in Tuva has also attracted close attention. Its dating is a moot point but supporters of an earlier date (ninth–eighth centuries B.C.) believe that it is precisely this site that points to Central Asia as the zone in which the Scythian culture that spread across the Eurasian steppes first took shape.[16]

However, as new material accumulates and is carefully scrutinized there seems to be increasing evidence in support of a different concept, that is, that in the Scythian epoch there existed in the steppe zone not one but rather a whole series of distinctive cultures belonging to different peoples. Even the features that stamp these cultures as similar show appreciable local variations, while their other characteristics arc equally specific. The common features are due not only to their having come from a single source or to ethnic affinities but also to close contacts between the steppe tribes. These factors account for similar economic structures, bringing in their train an outward unification of life-style, and leading to the formation of a Scytho-Siberian cultural entity. Within this entity, every culture pattern is 'completely distinct and original by virtue of its own particular historical past and the particular conditions ruling in the country in which it is found'.[17] This of course in no way rules out the existence also of ethnic ties between some of these peoples.

A whole range of such Scythian-type cultures in the Eurasian steppes has already been studied. In addition to Scythian remains in the Black Sea area, these studies have covered Sarmatian complexes in the country round the lower reaches of the Don and Volga[18] and

15 Chernikov, 1965.
16 Terenozhkin, 1976, pp. 210–11.
17 Gryaznov, 1978, p. 18.
18 Smirnov, 1964.

various groups of Saka sites in Central Asia: on the lower Syr Darya, [19] in the Pamirs[20] and in Semirechye, [21] and a whole series of cultures whose assignment to any particular people mentioned in the sources is problematical, that is, the Tasmol culture in central Kazakhstan, [22] the Pazîrîk culture in the Altai, [23] the Tagar culture in southern Siberia.

Among the steppe peoples of the Scythian group the predominant economic activity was nomadic herding, but in some areas the economy was of a more complex nature.

Herodotus (IV. 17–18) describes the Pontic Scythian tribes partly as sedentary agriculturalists but he says (1.216) that the Massagetae of Central Asia 'sow no grain but live by keeping herds and fishing. . . . They also drink milk.' Investigation of the large fortified settlement of Chirik-Rabat, on the northwestern confines of the Kyzyl Kum Desert, a settlement connected with the Massagetae, certainly contradicts the statement that they led a purely nomadic life and shows that in their economy the ancient traditions of fishing were combined with tillage of the land and semi-nomadic stock-raising.

Close ties between the nomadic and agricultural societies of Central Asia can be traced not only in the political and ethnic but also in the cultural and productive spheres. As is usually the case with nomads in general, craft production among the nomads of Central Asia was not so well developed as in the settled agricultural provinces, from which they obtained the wares they needed. A social division of labour thus grew up between the nomads and the settled agriculturalists and craftsmen.

Classical writers were much impressed by the excellent quality of the arms of the Central Asian nomads. Quintus Curtius (IV.9.3) noted that they had coats of mail made 'of iron plates'. According to Arrian (III.13.4), the Central Asian warriors went into battle 'carefully covered' with a metal coat of mail. They also used metal helmets and shields of various shapes and sizes. According to Herodotus (1.215), the Massagetae's horses were protected by breast-plates. It has been suggested that it was in Central Asia that equine armour first appeared.[24] In the absence of any archaeological evidence for the advanced production of weapons by the nomads themselves, it may be supposed that some of their arms, especially defensive armour which required much workmanship, were imported from the provinces inhabited by a sedentary population.

On the other hand, evidence of ceramic production by the nomads themselves is provided by the so-called 'barbaric ceramics', distinguished by an extremely coarse texture.

[19] Tolstov and Itina, 1966; Vishnevskaya, 1973.
[20] Litvinsky, 1972.
[21] Akishev and Kushaev, 1963.
[22] Margulan, 1966, pp. 303 et seq.
[23] Rudenko, 1953.
[24] Gafurov, 1972, p. 92.

Typical of the tribes in the Uzboi region, in particular, were the large trough-shaped vessels, used as ossuaries; in the oases, they were unknown. Another point suggesting that they were locally produced is their usually large size (over 1 m in length), which would have made it difficult to transport them over long distances on account of their fragility.

Judging by Herodotus' account of the religion of the Massagetae, they practised the cult of the supreme sun god – Mithra – associated with various forms of fire- and horse-worship. Some scholars are of the opinion that as Zoroastrianism spread, some of the Sakas adopted its teachings.[25] The question of the Sakas' religion may be approached, it would seem, in the same way as that of their culture. There could not have been only one religion in such a vast region. The chances are that there were local interpretations of similar beliefs and rites, these being reflected in varying burial ceremonials in different provinces.

Some information about the religious view of the nomads of north-west Turkmenistan is provided by the Ichîanlî, [26] a monumental stone building dating from the fifth to second centuries B.C. This was, in all likelihood, a cult centre for the nomadic tribes of the plateau beyond the Uzboi.[27] The plan of the building is rectangular (35 × 40 m) with rounded corners to the south-east and south-west. The upper part of the building is topped by a thick and intricately constructed stone structure on which a hot fire had burned for a long time. The eastern and western part along the slope of the central elevation is traversed by parallel arched rows of vertically standing slabs, the gaps between which are filled with ashes of the 'sacred' fire that were brought here. South of the central high ground were outbuildings and passageways lined with large stone slabs standing on their edges. The surviving walls are as much as 2 m high. On the northern side, there is a semi-enclosed right-angled area with two altars. Other buildings contain large hearths or altars.[28] Traces of the prolonged action of fire are visible everywhere, and slag, the bones of animals (predominantly horse skulls and hooves), and a considerable number of bronze arrow-heads have been found. Two distinct types of pottery have been discovered in the complex: the local Daha-Massagetian earthenware and the roundware brought in from the south-western and southern regions. The large quantity of horses' bones inevitably brings to mind Herodotus' observation that the only god the Massagetae worshipped was the sun, to which they sacrificed horses (1.216). The horse, reflecting the ideology that was taking shape among the nomadic peoples, was

[25] Litvinsky, 1972.
[26] Almost in the centre of the burial ground containing barrows of different periods located on a hill to the south of the Dordul heights (a plateau beyond the Uzboi river) dominating the sands of the Kara Kum lowlands, the ruins of a stone building were discovered, which excavations showed to have no connection with the burial ground.
[27] Yusupov, 1976, p. 42.
[28] The fact that Ichîanlî had a number of peripheral 'altars' in addition to a central altar suggests that the former, unlike the latter, were directly associated with burial grounds.



FIG. 2. Decoration cut out from leather of a saddle covering: first kurgan at Pazîrîk (mountainous Altai). (After Rudenko, 1953.)

widely represented in the distinctive Scytho-Saka-Massagetian art known as the 'animal style'. Tacitus (VI.37) also noted the ideological significance of the horse image in speaking of the sacrificial slaughter of horses as a Parthian custom; so did Philostratus, who observed that the Parthian king Vardanes sacrificed a white horse of the best Nisa breed. The horse was equally popular in both Scythian and Saka art.[29]

The art of the Achaemenids also owes much to the nomadic art from which it borrowed so many features. At the same time, Achaemenid works in turn had a strong influence on the culture of the nomads. Evidence of the cultural and trade relations between Achaemenid Iran and Central Asia and the regions to the north-east of it is provided by various objects (everyday and ceremonial) discovered in the excavations of kurgans, such as the Arzhan burial mound (eighth-seventh centuries B.C.) and the Tuva and the Pazîrîk barrows (sixth-fourth centuries B.C.) in the Altai. Here, due to the permanent layer of ice, articles of leather (see Fig. 2), wool and thick felt have survived in an excellent state of preservation. Of considerable interest are pieces of woollen cloth and a short pile carpet with woven designs which suggest that they were of Iranian origin, though a Middle Asian provenance is not altogether excluded.[30] It seems reasonable to infer that their basic type of dwelling was the portable yurt. Burial sites at different localities show differences in form of construction, the objects they contain and the manner of burial. In the vicinity of the Sarîkamîsh delta of the Amu Darya, in the lower reaches of the Syr Darya and in Semirechye, alongside shallow-ditch graves were the huge barrows of the aristocracy, with complex wooden constructions or sophisticated structures in unbaked brick typical of the architecture of the seventh to third centuries B.C. In north-west Turkmenistan and in the eastern Pamirs, monumental stone vaults built at ground level were quite common and

[29] *Skifî i Sarmatî*1972 pp. 96–7.
[30] Gryaznov, 1975, p. 10; *Istoriya Turkmenskoy SSR*, 1957, pp. 69–71.

widespread, serving as family or tribal tombs. Such tombs have yielded a rich variety of articles – weapons, ornaments (including some in the animal style), and horse trappings very similar to those found in the Sarmatian monuments in the Ural region. Besides local earthenware, they contain bronze weapons and ornaments, imported beads (carnelian and lazurite) and pottery vessels brought in from the oases, providing further evidence of the links between the Saka-Massagetae and the Central and Western Asian worlds. The lion and panther motifs in the art of south Tagisken and Uygarak locate the Sakas of the Aral Sea region in the area to which the Scytho-Siberian animal style had spread.[31] Overall the nomadic tribes made a very significant contribution to the development of the Central Asian peoples. Military and political vitality, vigorous economic development, fostered by the commerce essential to the nomadic way of life, and strikingly original art were their characteristic features.

31 Vishnevskaya, 1973; Vishnevskaya and Itina, 1971; Itina, 1981.

2

MEDIA AND ACHAEMENID IRAN*

M. A. Dandamayev

Contents

The immigration of the Median and Persian tribes

When and how the Medes and Persians reached the Iranian plateau is still an open question, though it has been discussed in scholarly literature for decades. Until recently, some scholars held that the original homeland of the Iranians lay in Middle Asia, from which some of the tribes were thought to have reached the Iranian plateau between the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. But many now consider that they came there via the Caucasus from the steppes of southern Russia.[1] V. I. Abaev, for one, considers that the Iranian tribes were

* See Map 1.
[1] Grantovskiy, 1970, pp. 7 et seq.

in southern Russia in the early second millennium B.C. and that, subsequently, some of them left for Iran via the Caucasus and for Middle Asia via the north Caspian coast, while the Scythians, who were also of Iranian stock, remained in southern Russia.[2]

The Medes and Persians certainly appeared in Iran as early as the beginning of the first millennium B.C. There were indeed places where the older, non-Iranian tribes – the Kassites, Kutians and others – remained politically predominant during the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. But from the second half of the seventh century the Iranians formed the majority in many parts of western Iran, including the region that was to become the Median kingdom and the lands to the west. When the Iranians appeared there, they already had advanced cultural, social and economic traditions; they engaged in both pastoralism and agriculture, were thoroughly acquainted with metals, reared horses and used the chariot. Like the Later Achaemenid Empire, the Kingdom of the Medes arose in a region where Iranian speakers predominated and was rooted in the previous I development of the Iranian tribes.

The early history of the Iranians is only scantily reflected in written sources. Assyrian texts show that the Medes had settled in north-western Iran at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. In the ninth century B.C., this region had scarcely begun to change from a tribal to a class society, and was divided into scores of petty princedoms, ruling alike over the Medes and the indigenous peoples of Kutian or Kassite descent.

The first reference in Assyrian sources to the Persians also relates to the ninth century B.C. An inscription of King Shalmaneser III, written around 843, mentions the province of Parsua; in 834 the Assyrians levied taxes from twenty-seven 'kings' of that province. Until recently it was widely assumed that Parsua was near Lake Urmia, but Levine has rescently demonstrated that it was most probably in the central Zagros mountains.[3]

At that time the Persians were not yet united but were led by many separate chieftains. Assyrian texts of the late eighth century B.C. speak of the land *Paršumaš* to the east of the modern Sulaymaniyah, that is, north-west of Elam. The Persians are thought to have parted from the Median tribes around 800 B.C., and gradually to have moved south-eastwards. In 714 they are mentioned as subjects of the Assyrian monarch Sargon II. With the passage of time they came to occupy the ancient land of Elam in south-west Iran, which was named *Pārsa* after the new arrivals.

This region is roughly equivalent to the modern Iranian province of Fars, an Arabization of Middle Persian *Pārs* going back to the Old Persian name *Pārsa* used to designate the land and people of the ancient Persians as well as their capital, Persepolis. The name

[2] Abaev, 1969, pp. 121–4.
[3] Levine, 1974, pp. 106 et seq.

'Persis' is derived from 'Persia', the Greek transcription of Old Persian *Pārsa*. The forerunner of the country's modern name, *Iran*, was first mentioned by the Greek author Eratosthenes in the third century B.C. as *Ariane*, deriving from Old Iranian *āryānām xšāθram* meaning 'land of the Aryans', since the Persians and Medes held themselves to be Aryan tribes. Both they and other Iranian tribes such as the Bactrians, Chorasmians, Sogdians and Sakas acknowledged their common origins and the kinship of the languages they spoke.

Archaeologists such as Ghirshman suggest that the route the Iranian tribes took is further indicated by changes in material culture, more especially in particular forms of burial or the decoration of horse harness and pottery. Ghirshman's view is that rather than conquering Elam, the Persians acquired lands there by entering the service of local rulers as cavalry, the latter being unknown in Western Asia before they reached the Iranian plateau.[4]

Before the early 640s B.C. the Persians were dependent on the kings of Elam, briefly becoming tributaries of the Assyrians. Apparently they were even then organized in a tribal alliance headed by chieftains of the Achaemenid lineage. The founder of the dynasty is traditionally held to be Achaemenes. From 675 to 650 B.C., the Persian alliance was led by Cišpiš (*Teïspes* in Greek transcription), whom later tradition held to be Achaemenes' son. The kingship then passed to his son, Cyrus I, who was, as is clear from an Assyrian inscription, the lord of *Paršumaš* and about 646 B.C. sent his son as a hostage to Niniveh, the capital of Assyria.

Some of the Persians adopted a sedentary life-style, while others remained nomadic pastoralists. Gradually the tribes came to occupy the greater part of the Iranian plateau. The Medes and Persians were then merely part of the greater Iranian world that stretched from the northern coast of the Black Sea to what is now Afghanistan. The ethnically related Cimmerians and Scythians lived to the north of the Black Sea. Herodotus (VII.64) states that the Persians called all the Scythian tribes 'Sakas', while the Greeks called the nomadic tribes of southern Russia and Middle Asia 'Scythians'. In modern scholarship the name 'Sakas' is reserved for the ancient tribes of northern and eastern Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan to distinguish them from the related Massagetae of the Aral region and the Scythians of the Pontic steppes. These tribes spoke Iranian languages, and their chief occupation was nomadic pastoralism.

Media

The need to resist the marauding forays of the Assyrians hastened the unification of the petty Median princedoms. In 672 B.C., the Medes, supported by Cimmerians and

[4] Ghirshman, 1977, p. 51.

Scythians who had thrust into Western Asia from the Pontic steppes at the end of the eighth century and beginning of the seventh century B.C., rebelled against Assyria. The Assyrian king Esarhaddon persuaded the Scythians to abandon the rebels, but the Medes fought on and won their independence, setting up their own state. By the middle of the seventh century B.C. Media was a major kingdom ranking with Elam, Urartu, Mannai and, of course, Assyria.

In 653 B.C. the Medes mounted an attack on Assyria, but the Scythians, who were allies of Assyria, fell on the Medes. Pressed on two fronts, the Medes were defeated, and from 653 to 624 B.C. the Scythians ruled Media. In 624 B.C. King Cyaxares defeated the Scythians and finally united all Median tribes into a single state whose capital was Ecbatana. Cyaxares soon established a powerful regular army, reorganizing it by type of weapon into spearmen, bowmen and cavalry, rather than as the previous tribal levies.

The Medes could then turn against their time-honoured enemy, Assyria, which had already been at war with Babylonia for over ten years. In 614 B.C. they seized *Aššur*, the ancient capital of Assyria; and in 612 B.C., helped by the Babylonians, they stormed its chief city, Niniveh. The Assyrian Empire lay in ruins and the Medes took eastern Asia Minor and northern Mesopotamia, the heartland of Assyria.

Cyaxares, called the 'founder of dominion over Asia' by the Greek tragedian Aeschylus, set about expanding the frontiers of his state at the expense of his southern and eastern neighbours. One of the first blows fell on Persia around 624 B.C. Judging by later indirect evidence, Cyaxares also succeeded in taking Parthia, Hyrcania to the east of the Caspian Sea, and Armenia.

About 590 B.C. he annexed Mannai, a major state to the west of Media. At the same time the Medes subjugated Urartu. When in 590 B.C. the Median army reached the River Halys, Alyattes, ruler of the flourishing state of Lydia in Asia Minor, was alarmed by Cyaxares' conquests and opposed him. The war between the two kingdoms lasted five years, with neither side gaining a decisive victory. On 29 May 584 B.C. an eclipse of the sun during a battle on the Halys was interpreted by both sides as an ill omen. They therefore stopped the war, and made a peace treaty establishing the River Halys as the boundary between Lydia and Media. In the same year Cyaxares died, bequeathing a powerful state to his son Astyages. During the following century, Media was the centre of Iranian material and intellectual culture, which the Persians subsequently took up and developed. Median art in particular was one of the chief components in subsequent Achaemenid art.

The rise of the Persian Empire

Between 600 and 559 B.C. Persia was ruled by Cambyses I, a vassal of the Median kings. In 558 his son, Cyrus II, became king of the sedentary Persian tribes, the foremost of whom were the *Pasargadai*. The Persian confederation also included the *Maraphioi* and the *Maspioi*. The heartland of the Persian kingdom lay around the city of Pasargadae, built chiefly in the early part of Cyrus' reign (Fig. 1). The hill and plains tribes – the *Kyrtioi*, the *Mardoi* (some of whom also lived in Media), the *Sagartioi* and some nomadic tribes – and also the settled *Karmanioi, Panthialoi* and *Derusiai*, were later subjected to Cyrus, apparently after the war with Media.

Persia's social organization at this time can be described only in outline. The fundamental social unit was the *nmāna* or large patriarchal family. The *nmānapati*, the head of the family, was a kind of paterfamilias with unlimited temporal and spiritual power over all his kin. The totality of families formed the clan (*vis*). The clan commune, like the later rural commune, consisted of a number of families and was governed by its elder(*vispati*). It remained a powerful force for many centuries. The clans were united in a tribe (*zantu*) led by a chief (*zantupati*), and several tribes made up a province (*dahyu*) governed by a king. The chief occupation was agriculture and animal husbandry, particularly the breeding of horses.



Fig. 1. Tomb of Cyrus II at Pasargadae.

When Cyrus became King of Persia, four major powers remained in the Near East – Media, Lydia, Babylonia and Egypt. In 553 B.C. Cyrus revolted against Astyages, King of Media, to whom the Persians had formerly been subject. The war lasted for three years, ending in 550 with a complete victory for the Persians. Ecbatana, the former Median capital, became one of Cyrus' royal residences. After subduing Media, Cyrus formally retained the Median kingdom and adopted the Median king's official titles: 'Great King, King of Kings, King of the Lands'. With Media conquered, Persia, previously a little-known outlying province, entered the main stage of world history and was for the next two centuries to play a politically dominant role.

The Persians took the whole of Elam and in 549–548 B.C. extended their dominion to the lands that had been part of the Median Empire – Parthia, Hyrcania and probably Armenia. Meanwhile Croesus of Lydia had observed Cyrus' rapid successes with alarm and began to prepare for war. At the initiative of the Egyptian Pharaoh, Amasis, Croesus concluded an alliance with him; but the allies failed to grasp the need for swift and decisive action, while Persia grew daily in power. In late October 548 B.C. there was a bloody battle between the Persians and Lydians on the River Halys, but the outcome was unsure and neither hazarded a further fight. Croesus retired to his capital of Sardis, and the next battle was fought outside its walls. Pressed by superior forces, the Lydians had to take refuge in the city. After a siege of fourteen days, Sardis fell to the Persians in May 547, and the Lydian kingdom came to an end. It was then the turn of the Greek city-states in Asia Minor, which were soon forced to acknowledge Cyrus' rule.

The pre-Achaemenid states in Central Asia

The chronology of Cyrus' next campaigns is not fully known. He instructed his commanders to complete the subjugation of Asia Minor while he himself went to Ecbatana to prepare for the conquest of Babylonia, Egypt, Bactria and the Sakas. As is well known, the Persians conquered Egypt only after Cyrus' death. He took Babylonia in 539 B.C. Bactria and the Sakas were certainly subdued during his lifetime, as the Bisutun inscription, made around 518 B.C., lists as Persian possessions Margiana, Bactria, other Central Asian countries, Gandhāra (Old Persian *Gandāra*, Old Indian *Gandhāra*) and Sattagydia in the east. It is thus clear that Persian rule had been extended to the Indus and Jaxartes (now Syr Darya) under Cyrus. During the reign of his son, Cambyses II, there were, apparently, no wars in those parts. From Pliny's *Historia Naturalis* (VI.92) we know that Cyrus sacked the city of Capisa (*Kāpiśa*) (north of modern Kabul); Arrian writes in his *Anabasis* (VI.24.3) of Cyrus' attack on 'the land of the Indians', where the Persians lost a large part

of their forces; and both Arrian in his *Anabasis* (III.27.4) and Diodorus (XVII.81.1) speak of the *Ariaspoi*, a tribe on the southern border of Drangiana, which provided Cyrus' army with food during its campaign and was rewarded with exemption from paying taxes to the Persian king.

When did the Persians win these lands? Some scholars believe that Cyrus only conquered Central Asia after the subjugation of Babylonia, but that appears improbable. According to Herodotus (I.177–8), Cyrus successively subdued all the people of Asia while his commander, Harpagus, was ravaging the cities of Asia Minor, and only then attacked Babylonia. It may thus be assumed that he won his Central Asian provinces after his victory over Lydia but before the war with Babylonia. Highly interesting in this regard is a report by the Babylonian historian Berossus (third century B.C.), who probably drew on Babylonian sources for his description of Cyrus' campaigns. He writes: 'Cyrus attacked Babylonia after he had reduced all the rest of Asia', [5] that is to say, only after capturing his most distant provinces in the north and east between 545 and 539 B.C., Drangiana, Margiana, Chorasmia, Sogdiana, Bactria, Aria, Gedrosia, the Saka tribes, Sattagydia, Arachosia and Gandhāra, did Cyrus turn his attention to Babylonia.

There are unfortunately no reliable written sources for the history of Middle Asia prior to the Achaemenids. Even Astyages of Media may have had to contend to some extent with the Middle Asian tribes. Ctesias says that the Sakas were under Median rule, but the sources neither support nor refute him. There is no trustworthy information about earlier clashes between the Middle Asian tribes and peoples living to the west of them. Diodorus (II.4) and Justin (I.1) speak of a siege of Bactra by the legendary Assyrian monarch Ninus and its capture by the equally legendary Semiramis; but the available sources suggest that Assyrian forces never penetrated farther east than Media proper.

It has often been suggested that various organized states existed in pre-Achaemenid Middle Asia. In the last century M. Duncker wrote that an ancient state of Bactria had arisen as early as the ninth century B.C. Although his view was rejected by others, J. Prášek later argued that there was no reason to dispute the existence of an ancient Bactrian kingdom, since the *Avesta* spoke of the Bactrian monarch *Vištāspa*, the legendary patron of Zoroaster. In his view, Bactria must have been an independent state before the Persian conquest, since it was a major administrative province under the Achaemenids. He further suggested that Margiana also had its own kings prior to the Achaemenids.[6] Further proof that there was an ancient Bactrian kingdom is sometimes seen in Ctesias' report of the

[5] Mullerus, 1849, p. 50.
[6] Prášsek, 1906–10, pp. 51–4.

Bactrians' resistance to Cyrus, and in Herodotus' suggestion that together with Babylonia, Egypt and the Sakas, Bactria was the major obstacle to Persian world conquest.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that the question of the existence of an ancient Bactrian kingdom remains open. Fresh evidence about the level of development in Middle Asia has come from excavations by archaeologists from the former Soviet Union. V. M. Masson considers that as early as the first third of the first millennium B.C., an urban civilization had grown up in Middle Asia on the oases of major irrigation systems, and that towns with citadels had been built on man-made platforms.[7] A case in point is ancient Hyrcania, in the south-west of modern Turkmenistan, where settlements up to 5 ha in area with citadels have been found. Masson believes that an early class society had begun to spring up in settled oases, and that this corroborates the information in the *Avesta* that major political units already existed in Central Asia. On the other hand M. M. D'yakonov argues that there were no large organized states in Middle Asia before the Persian conquest and both the farming oases and the barbarian periphery with its nomadic Saka population came with the decay of military democracy. In the middle of the first millennium B.C., irrigated agriculture in the major river valleys had given birth to states in Chorasmia, Sogdiana, Margiana and Bactria; but their borders coincided with those of the irrigation systems. More specifically, D'yakonov postulates that Margiana had no tradition of monarchy, since in the Bisutun inscription the leader of the rebellion there at the start of Darius I's reign is called a chief, while the rebel leaders in Persia, Media, Elam, Babylonia and other countries are self-proclaimed kings. D'yakonov points out that the characteristic occupation of the society described in the *Avesta* was pastoralism and that agriculture played only a subordinate role.[8]

Avestan society represents one of the most difficult problems. It has long been established that its material culture was archaic. The *Avesta* makes no mention of iron, although bronze was in use; and a sophisticated urban life, enduring states or crafts practised separately from farming are unknown. The *Gāθās*, the earliest part of the *Avesta*, which reflect the material culture and social relations of eastern Iran and Middle Asia in the pre-Achaemenid period, depict a society of sedentary herdsmen and farmers, still preserving a system of clan and tribal relationships. As the clan communes disintegrated, so early class units began to spring up, and the emergence of classes is reflected in the *Gāθās*, which contain a protest against the rule of the tribal élite.

The country in which Zoroaster preached is called *airyānəm vaējō* in the *Avesta*. Many scholars have located that country in Chorasmia, supposing this to have been the homeland

[7] Masson, 1959, pp. 58 et seq., 122 et seq.
[8] M. M. D'yakonov, 1961, p. 75.

of Zoroastrianism, from which it subsequently spread to Sogdiana, Margiana, Bactria and other countries. D'yakonov suggests that the *Avesta* was written in the Helmand/Tedzhen/Hari-rud valley, [9] and the same view is held by G. Gnoli, who considers that the home of the *Avesta* was Sistan and the adjacent regions.[10] At any rate, the society in which Zoroaster taught arose in eastern Iran, where the settled tribes and the Iranian nomads met.

J. Marquart argued that *airyānəm vaējō* was a major pre-Achaemenid state, centred on Chorasmia, that was destroyed by Cyrus – a hypothesis later supported by W. B. Henning, I. Gershevitch and S. P. Tolstov. Henning held that the state's original centres were Merv and Herat (ancient Aria, that is, the Haraiva of Old Persian inscriptions). The chief basis for conjectures about a 'Greater Chorasmia' is the report in Herodotus (III.17) that a dam on the River Akes (thought to be the modern Tedzhen/Hari-rud, the valley of which bordered on Parthia and Drangiana) belonged to Chorasmia and that, under the Achaemenids, Chorasmia, Parthia, Aria and Sogdiana made up a single satrapy. These scholars feel that the latter's boundaries were originally those of a state conquered by the Persians.[11]

Archaeologists, however, consider that in Chorasmia proper substantial progress in the development of irrigated agriculture may be observed only in the sixth century B.C., while in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. the country had neither a numerous population nor an advanced irrigation system. The rise of major settlements such as Kalalî-gîr was definitely an Achaemenid phenomenon. On these grounds, Gnoli feels that a 'Greater Chorasmia' is unlikely to have existed.[12]

Judging by the evidence available to date, the first Middle Asian cities began to rise only in the middle of the first millennium B.C., – the capitals of Sogdiana, Bactria and Margiana, which were some dozens of hectares in area and possessed citadels. An advanced farming culture based on artificial irrigation had appeared in these regions as early as the seventh century B.C., but in all probability no large organized states existed there at that time.

The Achaemenid Empire as a world power

In the autumn of 539 B.C. the Persians captured Babylonia. All the lands to the west as far as the Egyptian border – Syria, Palestine and Phoenicia – voluntarily submitted to Cyrus. This accomplished, Cyrus resolved to secure his north-eastern frontiers from invasion by the Massagctae. These forays had caused considerable damage to the settled parts of the Old Persian Empire. To put an end to the threat of Scythian invasions, Cyrus set up a

9 I. M. D'yakonov, 1971, p. 142.
10 Gnoli, 1975, pp. 386 et seq.
11 Henning, 1951, pp. 42 et seq.; Gershevitch, 1959, p. 14.
12 Gnoli, 1975, pp. 230–3.

number of fortified border settlements that classical writers usually call cities. One such, founded in Sogdiana in the basin of the Jaxartes where Ura-tyube now stands, existed until the Macedonian invasion and was called Cyropolis by classical authors.

In 530 B.C. Cyrus mounted a campaign against the Massagetae, the nomadic tribes living on the plains north of Hyrcania and cast of the Caspian. During a battle beyond the Amu Darya, Cyrus was defeated and killed, probably at the beginning of August. His defeat left a profound imprint on classical literature. According to ancient Greek authors, Cyrus lost 200,000 soldiers – a figure that is, of course, grossly exaggerated. There are several different accounts of the death of Cyrus. According to Herodotus (1.205–14) Cyrus took a camp of the Massagetac by subterfuge; but their main force, commanded by their queen, Tomyris, then inflicted a major defeat on the Persians and Cyrus' severed head was flung in a sack full of blood. Herodotus writes that this was the fiercest battle ever fought by 'barbarians', or non-Greeks.

Berossus and Ctesias give a somewhat different picture of the encounter. According to Berossus, Cyrus died fighting the Dahae, a Scythian tribe of Middle Asia, while according to Ctesias his last battle was against the Dcrbices, supported by Indians using battle elephants. In the fighting an Indian speared Cyrus in the liver, the wound proving fatal three days later. On hearing the news, the Scythian king Amorges dashed to the Persians' aid with 20, 000 tribal horsemen and, after a fierce battle, the Derbices were defeated.

The differences in the accounts of which tribes defeated Cyrus are due to the fact that the Derbices were part of a powerful tribal confederation of the Massagetae living in the steppes between the Caspian and Aral seas. In Ctesias' time they were the most famous among the Massagetae. But long before the time of Berossus (third century B.C.), the Dahae had replaced the Massagetae on the stage of history, and that is why he named them as Cyrus' adversaries.

Cyrus' eldest son Cambyses II came to the Achaemenid throne in 530 B.C. and soon began preparations for an attack on Egypt. The Egyptian army was quickly routed, its fleet surrendered without a fight and in May 525 B.C. Egypt became a Persian satrapy. Cambyses died in March 522 B.C.; and after a seven-month interval during which Gaumāta the Magus ruled, the Persian throne was seized by Darius I. At the start of his reign the peoples of Babylonia, Persia, Media, Elam, Margiana, Parthia, Sattagydia, the Middle Asian Saka tribes and Egypt all rose against Darius. The revolts were bloodily put down in the course of a year or so.

In 519 B.C. after he had restored the empire of Cyrus to its former borders, Darius led a campaign against the Scythian tribe known as the *Sakā Tigraxaudā*, that is, 'the Sakas who wear pointed caps', described in the fifth column of the Bisutun inscription. In

some passages, however, the inscription is damaged, and scholars have restored the missing characters in different ways. According to J. Harmatta, Darius reached the Aral Sea at the mouth of the *Araxša*, which can be equated with the Araxes of Herodotus, that is, the Oxus of the Hellenistic period (modern Amu Darya).[13] It has frequently been argued that the fifth column of the Bisutun inscription refers to Darius' famous campaign against the Black Sea Scythians – but that view is untenable if only because all Achaemenid inscriptions list the *Sakā Tigraxaudā*, against whom the campaign was mounted, together with the *Sakā Haumavargā* and other Middle Asian tribes and satrapies. Thus the *Sakā Tigraxaudā* and *Sakā Haumavargā* alike must both have dwelt in Middle Asia. The Black Sea Scythians figure in Achaemenid inscriptions as the 'Overseas Sakas' or *Sakā tayaiy paradraya*, in the same context as Thrace (Skudra).

In the earliest inscriptions, when the Persians had only one Scythian tribe to contend with, they called them simply the Sakas. In other words, they invested the collective name 'Sakas' with a definite ethnic connotation. Later, when they had subdued other Scythians, they began to distinguish between three tribes: the *Sakā Haumavargā*, the *Sakā Tigraxaudā* and the *Sakā tayaiy paradraya*, the Overseas Sakas of the Black Sea and of Middle Asia. The *Sakā Haumavargā* of Middle Asia appear to have been reduced first, under Cyrus. Skunxa, the chief of the *Sakā Tigraxaudā*, against whom Darius I campaigned in 519 B.C., is shown on the Bisutun relief (see FIG. 2.) as a captive wearing a sharp-pointed cap some 30 cm high. Darius replaced him by another chief of the same tribe. The *Sakā Tigraxaudā* (who wear pointed caps) were known to Greek authors as the *Orthokorybantioi*, a direct translation of the Old Persian name. They differed from other Scythians in Central Asia (and from the Chorasmians and Bactrians) in their pointed headgear. In other respects they all dressed similarly in a short tunic with a broad belt and narrow trousers.

The eastern Iranians figured prominently in the Achaemenid wars. Bactria alone provided the Persian army with 30,000 horsemen, while the Saka tribes supplied large numbers of mounted bowmen, who served in Persian garrisons in Egypt, Babylonia and other lands. Together with the Persians, Medes and Bactrians, the Sakas formed the core of the Achaemenid army, and distinguished themselves for their bravery in the major battles of the Gracco-Persian wars. Terracotta statuettes of Sakas, Bactrians, Chorasmians and Sogdians wearing hoods and long narrow trousers have been found during excavations in many cities of the Old Persian Empire, from Egypt to Central Asia. The Persian army's chief weapon was the Scythian composite bow, which had far better ballistic properties than those of other peoples. That is why the Medes and the Persians adopted the mounted archery tactics of the Scythians.

[13] Harmatta, 1979, p. 27.



FIG. 2. Rock relief of Darius I at Bisutun. Photo: © Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Eurasien-Abteilung.

Having conquered the *Sakā Tigraxaudā*, the Persians took Thrace, Macedonia and ancient north-western India between 519 and 512 B.C. By the end of the sixth century B.C. their empire stretched from the Indus in the east to the Aegean in the west, and from Armenia in the north to the first cataract on the Nile. Thus the greatest power of the ancient world came into being, uniting dozens of countries and peoples under the Persian kings. The social and economic institutions and cultural traditions established in the Achaemenid period played a great part in world history and endured for centuries, serving the states of Alexander the Great, the Seleucids, Parthians and Sasanians.

The Achaemenid Empire, however, soon began to weaken. During the wars with Greece in the first half of the fifth century B.C. the Persians suffered a number of major reverses in mainland Greece and at sea. In the fifth century, Egypt, Babylonia, Media, the Asia Minor provinces and others often revolted against Persian rule. In the early fourth century B.C. the Persians lost Egypt, which was recovered only in 342 B.C., shortly before the empire collapsed. Finally the Indian satrapy was also lost, while Chorasmia, Sogdiana and the Sakas became allies rather than subjects of the Persian kings. In addition, from the late fifth century B.C. the satraps of Asia Minor engaged in constant feuds from which the Achaemenids generally remained aloof. Some satraps frequently rebelled against the kings and, relying on the help of Greek mercenaries, attempted to become independent monarchs. Lastly, the court nobility came to wield great influence and intrigued against the kings it disliked.

Military setbacks in the Greek wars forced a radical change of diplomacy. They began to set states against each other, using bribery to that end. During the Peloponnesian war, Persia, still interested in weakening Greece, helped first Sparta and then Athens.

While the élite of Persia's aristocracy was engaged in palace intrigues and coups, a dangerous adversary was looming on the political horizon. In the spring of 334 B.C., Alexander's Macedonian army set out against Persia.

Although Persia had the largest army, it was considerably weaker than that of the Macedonians, and was no match for Alexander's heavy infantry. Although Persian commanders had long known that Greek and Macedonian soldiers had better weapons and tactical skills than their Persian counterparts, they had done nothing to improve their army and had ignored all the achievements of Greek military art. Their units of Greek mercenaries were now the strongest part of the Achaemenid army. After several Persian defeats, the decisive battle was fought on 1 October 331 B.C. at Gaugamela in Syria. The Persians were completely defeated and could no longer offer any systematic resistance to the Macedonian army. A year later, the Achaemenid Empire came to an end.

The Achaemenid economy

The Achaemenid Empire was marked by widely differing social and economic structures. It included Asia Minor, Elam, Babylonia, Syria, Phoenicia and Egypt, countries that, long before, had their own institutions of state. But together with these economically advanced countries, the Persians had subdued the Massagetae and other tribal peoples.

To administer such heterogeneous territories Darius I embarked on his renowned administrative and financial reforms around 518 B.C. He created a stable system of state government for the conquered countries and systematized tax collection. This led, *inter alia*, to the establishment of a new administrative system that underwent little change until the end of the empire. But even after Darius' reforms, each satrapy remained essentially autonomous in social and economic matters, endowed with its own social institutions and internal structure, and preserving its old local laws and traditions.

For administration and taxation Darius divided his empire into twenty regions known as satrapies, each governed by a satrap. This title had existed under Cyrus and Cambyses, but at that time both civil and military functions were combined in the hands of the same person, the satrap. Darius introduced a sharp distinction between the functions of the military commander and those of the satrap, who became purely a civil governor, responsible within his province for administration, justice, the economy, taxation and the supervision of officials. The army, conversely, was subject to military commanders who were independent of

the satraps and subordinate directly to the king. After the death of Darius I, however, the sharp demarcation between military and civilian functions was not strictly observed.

The larger satrapies might also include countries that enjoyed internal autonomy. This was particularly true of the distant provinces in whose internal affairs the Persian administration rarely interfered, governing them through local princes and confining itself to the receipt of taxes.

To implement these new reforms a large central civil service was established with an imperial chancellery. The central state administration was in Susa, the administrative capital of the empire. The imperial court spent the autumn and winter in Babylon, the summer in Ecbatana and the spring in Susa, while during the major festivals it met in Persepolis, Pasargadae or Susa. The satraps and military commanders were closely linked with the central civil service and were under the constant surveillance of the king and his functionaries. Everyone in the centre and the provinces was watched by police officials known as 'the king's ears and eyes' who were independent of the satraps and other local authorities, and reported directly to the king on any seditious words or deeds.

Old Persian inscriptions

The Persian tribes that inhabited the south-west of the Iranian plateau during the first millennium B.C. spoke different dialects of Old Persian belonging to the Iranian branch of the Indo-Iranian or Aryan languages. In addition to Old Persian, the Old Iranian language group included Median (of which only isolated glosses have come down to us), Avestan (which has left a substantial body of literature), Parthian, Sogdian and Scythian. The cuneiform inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings were written in Old Persian. Old Persian cuneiform represented a huge step forward in the development of writing. Unlike Assyrian-Babylonian script, which used more than 600 signs, it consisted of only thirty-six syllabic signs and eight logograms (i.e. signs denoting individual words such as 'king', 'god', etc.) and hence was logo-syllabic. The idea for it probably came from Aramaic writing, which consisted of twenty-two simply formed signs. It adopted many of the features of Aramaic script but took the shape of its signs from Assyrian-Babylonian cuneiform, probably via the Elamites or Urartians.

It is still difficult to say with any certainty when Old Persian cuneiform arose. Most scholars date its invention to the reign of Cyrus II, but others such as W. Hinz date it to the reign of Darius I. Struve and D'yakonov have suggested that it was invented in Media in the pre-Achaemenid period under the influence of Urartian writing, and hence that the Persians received it in an already finished form. According to these scholars the style of

the Achaemenid inscriptions took shape under the influence of the Urartian annalists via the Median inscriptions.

The hypothetical Median origin of Old Persian cuneiform cannot be proved, however, so long as no Median inscriptions in cuneiform script have been found. That writing existed in the Median state is hard to doubt, but nothing is actually known about it. Furthermore, the possibility cannot be ruled out that another foreign-language script existed in Media, as occurred in many Near Eastern countries in ancient times.

About 200 Old Persian inscriptions are known so far. Many of them are accompanied by Elamite and Akkadian translations and some also by an Egyptian translation. This was to some extent a mark of respect for the historical tradition represented by languages that had been used for writing for several thousand years prior to the rise of the Achaemenid Empire. The inscriptions were displayed on major trade routes, royal tombs, palace walls and pillars, or carved on metal tableware, weapons, stone vases and seals. Some have been discovered in the foundations of palaces, where they had been placed as foundation plates. The majority of Old Persian inscriptions have been found in Persia, Elam and Media. The most famous inscription – the vast Bisutun relief (Fig. 2) – records the stormy closing years of the reign of Cambyses II and the early years of the reign of Darius I (*c*. 522–519 B.C.). It is written in Old Persian, Elamite and Akkadian, and the content is virtually the same in all three versions. It is located 30 km east of Kermanshah on the ancient caravan route between Babylon and Ecbatana, the Median capital. It is carved on a sheer rock face about 105 m from the ground, and its size makes it strikingly visible from the road that passes beneath. It is 7.8 m high by 22 m wide overall. It contains over 1,000 lines, each on average 2 m long.

The Bisutun inscription was translated into many other languages and sent out to all the satrapies of the Achaemenid Empire, as the inscription itself records. At the beginning of the present century, poorly preserved papyrus documents with an Aramaic translation of the Bisutun inscription were found during archaeological excavations on the island of Elephantine in southern Egypt – a text intended for dissemination in the western part of the empire. In 1899 a fragment of a stone block with part of an Akkadian version of the Bisutun inscription was discovered at Babylon in the ruins of a royal palace. The inscription consists of an introduction setting out the genealogy of Darius I, a historical part proper recounting events, and a conclusion. The exact dates and places of battles are indicated, and also, in the Akkadian and Aramaic versions, the number of Darius' enemies killed or taken prisoner. It may be concluded from this that the accounts of the main battles were compiled immediately after the battles had taken place, indicating unquestionably the authenticity of much of the information provided.

Above the inscription there is a relief 3 m high by 5.48 m wide, depicting the victory of Darius I over the peoples of the Achaemenid Empire and their leaders who had risen in rebellion in 522–521 B.C. With his left hand the supreme god of the Persians, Ahura Mazda, holds out a ring to Darius, symbolizing his investiture with royal power, and blesses him with his raised right hand. Darius is depicted life-size (1.72 m) (Fig. 3). His right hand is raised to Ahura Mazda in a gesture of prayer; in his left hand he holds a bow; and with his left foot he crushes Gaumāta, who briefly seized the Achaemenid throne. To the left, behind Darius, two of his courtiers can be seen – Gobryas his spear-bearer and Aspathines his bow-bearer. They are smaller than Darius (1.47 m) but taller than the rebel leaders, who hardly come up to Darius' chest (1.17 m). Directly behind Gaumāta are shown the eight usurping impostors and the leader of the *Sakā Tigraxaudā*. Their hands are tied behind their backs, and they are chained together by a single long chain.

The other major inscriptions of Darius I are to be found at Naqsh-i Rustam, a few kilometres north of Persepolis. At the entrance to the Achaemenid royal sepulchres hewn out of the rock are two trilingual inscriptions. One contains the royal genealogy and a list of the countries under Persian rule; the other sets out the legal and ethical principles framing Darius' rule. There is also a relief depicting Darius. Gold and silver foundation plates with inscriptions of Darius I have been excavated in Persepolis. Many examples of such inscriptions have been found on palace buildings in Susa, some written on marble, others on clay tablets and bricks. A statue of Darius nearly 3 m high but with the head missing, bearing an inscription in Old Persian, Elamite, Akkadian and a particularly detailed Egyptian hieroglyphic text, has also been found in Susa (Fig. 4). Stone inscriptions of Xerxes have been found in Persepolis and Pasargadae. Among these the Daiva inscription relating his efforts to ban the worship of false divinities (the daivas) is most important.

Among the Achaemenid inscriptions found in Egypt mention should be made of the three stele of Darius I bearing inscriptions about the construction of a Suez canal, written in Old Persian, Elamite, Akkadian and Egyptian.

The decline of Old Persian cuneiform can already be seen under Xerxes' successors. Although some inscriptions from the Late Achaemenid period have survived, only a few are of real historical value. More than ten gold and silver vessels bearing Old Persian inscriptions or the usual trilingual inscriptions are known. Beside uninscribed specimens (Fig. 5) on a series of Achaemenid royal seals (Fig. 6) cuneiform inscriptions have also survived.

The official written language of the empire was Aramaic, used for communication between chancelleries throughout the state. Official documents written in Aramaic were sent out from Susa to all corners of the empire. On receiving them the local scribes, who



FIG. 3. Darius I on the Bisutun relief. (From Heinz Luschey, *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran, N.F.1* 1968.)

knew two or more languages, translated them into the native language of the governors. In addition to Aramaic, which was common to the entire state, the different countries used local languages for drafting official documents.



FIG. 4. Statue of Darius from Susa. (Courtesy of Ahmad Tehrani-ye Moghaddam, Iran-e Bastan Museum.)

State administration

To help run the satrapies, there was a regular postal service. On the major highways there were state-protected relay stations and inns at intervals of a day's march; and on important passes there were strongly garrisoned watch-towers. Thus the road from Sardis to Susa, some 2, 470 km in length, had 111 relay stations. By changing mounts and couriers, up



FIG. 5. Cylinder seal of Artaxerxes II?. Photo: © Terebenin (Hermitage, St. Petersburg.)



FIG. 6. Achaemenid cylinder seal with the name of Darius I.

to 300 km could be covered in a day, and the entire journey from Sardis to Susa could be done in seven days.

Elamite texts from Persepolis, written in the late sixth century B.C., provide a wealth of information about the delivery of state mail to the various satrapies. Extant documents include official letters, reports by senior officials to each other or the king and the king's instructions. Reports addressed to the monarch were usually sent to Susa and were probably destined for the imperial chancellery. From Susa, couriers bearing royal orders were sent out to virtually every satrapy. The regular delivery of state instructions required a considerable body of professional couriers who were maintained entirely at state expense. At

the relay stations there were royal stores from which food was provided for the couriers and others travelling on official business. In those far-off days the postal service was used only for official mail; private letters were sent either by some chance expedient or by private messenger.

The economy

Under Cyrus and Cambyses there was as yet no properly established taxation system based on the economic potential of the countries making up the empire. About 518 B.C., Darius introduced a new system. All satrapies were obliged to pay money taxes in silver, the amount of which was strictly fixed for each satrapy and determined on the basis of the area of cultivated land and its fertility as calculated through the mean annual yield. Herodotus provides a detailed list of the taxes paid by the satrapies. Thus Sattagydia, Gandhāra and Arachosia, which formed a single province for taxation purposes, paid 170 talents of silver (1 talent = 30 kg), Bactria 300 talents, the Sakas 250 talents, while Parthia, Chorasmia, Sogdiana and Haraiva paid 300 talents.

Darius I introduced a standard monetary unit throughout the empire the gold daric weighing 8.42 g (Fig 7), which formed the basis of the Achaemenid monetary system. The minting of gold coins was a prerogative of the Persian king. The usual medium of commerce was the silver shekel, 5.6 g in weight, with some 95 per cent pure silver. It was minted chiefly in the Asia Minor satrapies in the king's name. Silver and smaller copper coins of various values were also struck by the autonomous cities, the dependent princes and the satraps. Minted Persian coins were little used outside Asia Minor; the usual medium of trade was unminted silver ingots, with Persian coinage playing only a secondary role. This explains why the hoard of silver coins found in Kabul in 1933, which proves that minted coinage was used in Afghanistan (it was buried in roughly 380 B.C.), contains only eight minted Persian shekels. At the same time it contains worn Greek coins from virtually



FIG. 7. Achaemenid gold daric. Photo: © Terebenin (Hermitage, St. Petersburg.)

every part of Greece and every period, from archaic square, stamped ingots to staters and tetradrachms. Coins were first introduced into Central Asia during the Achaemenid period. Darics and other Persian coins have been found there, but there is no reason to believe that they were common. Precious metal, which belonged to the state, was minted at the king's discretion and most remained unminted. Thus the proceeds of taxation were stored for decades in the imperial treasuries and removed from circulation.

The relative political calm throughout Western Asia under the Achaemenids, together with the availability of good sea and land routes, promoted the development of international trade on an unprecedented scale. Another important factor in the flourishing of commerce was the expedition by Scylax of Caryanda in Asia Minor, whom Darius I (*c.* 518 B.C.) ordered to explore the possibility of opening sea links between India (i.e. modern Pakistan) and other countries of the empire. Scylax's vessels sailed down the Indus to the ocean, along the southern shores of Iran and, rounding Arabia, reached the Red Sea coast in 30 months.

In Achaemenid times there were many major caravan routes. Particular importance was attached to the road which, crossing the Zagros mountains, linked Babylon with Ecbatana and ran on to Bactria and the borders of India. Iran was linked with the Indus valley by a road through Makran. A further aspect in the developement of commercial links was the differing natural and climatic conditions of the countries making up the Achaemenid Empire. From India gold, ivory and incense were imported; from Sogdiana and Bactria lazurite, and carnelian were taken to Western Asia; and from Chorasmia, turquoise. Judging by the Achaemenid art products found in Sarmatian tumuli from the end of the fifth century B.C. near Orsk in the Urals – including a trilingual inscription of the Persian ruler Artaxerxes I – the nomads of the southern Urals maintained commercial contacts with the Central Asian satrapies; Central Asia has even yielded artefacts made by Greek craftsmen from Naukratis in the Nile delta. Further evidence of Iran's commercial links with Central Asia and the lands to the north-east has come from excavations of fifth-century-B.C. tumuli in the Altai, where artefacts preserved in the permafrost include a trimmed pile carpet, apparently of Median or Persian origin.

Iranian culture in the Achaemenid period

Persian conquests and the fact that the empire united dozens of peoples helped its subjects to broaden their intellectual and geographical horizons. The Achaemenid period was one of intensive ethnic mingling and syncretism in cultures and beliefs. The prime reason was that contacts between different parts of the empire had become more regular than in the

previous period. More specifically, the sources report frequent visits by state functionaries from Arachosia, Haraiva, Gandhāra, Bactria and other eastern Iranian or Central Asian countries to Susa and Persepolis.

Iran, which had since time immemorial acted as an intermediary in East-West cultural exchange, maintained its historical role under the Achacmenids. At the same time, the Iranians created their own original and sophisticated civilization. One of its achievements was the adaptation of the cuneiform script for writing Old Persian (see above). The chief official written language was Aramaic; under the Achaemenids, standard formulae were devised to render Aramaic terms and clerical expressions into the different Iranian languages; and from the official written Aramaic of the Achaemenids, the later written forms of Parthian, Middle Persian, Sogdian and Chorasmian were derived. It was in this period that the peoples of Central Asia first became acquainted with Aramaic script. This, too, was the period when a number of Old Iranian words – chiefly socio-economic, military and administrative terms – were borrowed by Indian languages.

Among the outstanding achievements of Old Iranian civilization was Achaemenid art, which is known above all from the monuments of Pasargadac, Persepolis and Susa, the Bisutun rock reliefs, the Persian royal tombs at Naqsh-i Rustam, and from large quantities of metal and stone carvings. The subjects may be military triumphs or hunting exploits by Persian kings and warriors, combat between heroic monarchs and various monsters symbolizing vil, or palace and religious rituals. It was the characteristics of this art that took shape at the turn of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.

Persepolis impresses through the size of its platform, the height of the columns, the reliefs in the *apadana* or grand hall (Figs. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15). The canons laid down under Darius I were in no way violated in the later palaces at Persepolis, the architectural decoration of the rock sepulchres of the Persian kings or the carved metalwork of the fifth to fourth centuries, though new motifs and images were added. Persepolis was the home of the imperial Achaemenid style which was to symbolize the might and grandeur of the kingship and that subsequently spread far afield, creating a form of cultural unity from the Indus to the coasts of Asia Minor. Metalwork and particularly rhytons, made by craftsmen from Media, Asia Minor or eastern Iran, are canonical in form, decoration and even dimensions, regardless of their geographical origins (Figs. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21).

Analysis of Achaemenid art reveals the influence of the Egyptian hypostyle hall or echoes of Ionia in the design of the columns, while Urartian building techniques are plain to sec in the huge, man-made platforms. But the art itself is far from the sum of its borrowed components, as the borrowed forms rapidly lose their original qualities. In other words,

while the details of a given image or structure may be known from previous eras or other countries, the image itself is completely new and specifically Achaemcnid. All the material aspects of the art remain essentially original, and it is individualistic, the result of specific



FIG. 8. *Sakā Tigraxaudā* at Persopolis. Photo: © Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Eurasien-Abteilung.



FIG. 9. Bactrians at Persopolis. Photo: © Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Eurasien-Abteilung.

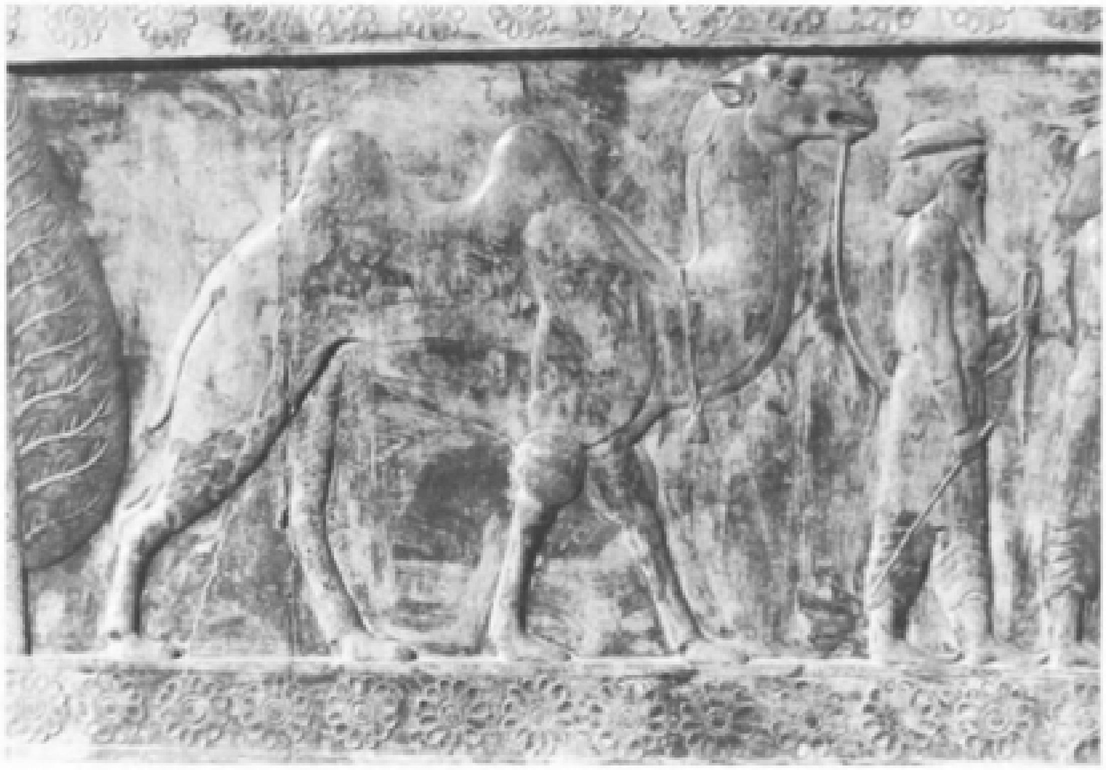


FIG. 10. Bactrian camel at Persopolis. Photo: © Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Eurasien-Abteilung.



FIG. 11. Detail of a relief at Persopolis. Photo: © Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Eurasien-Abteilung.

historical circumstances, a particular ideology and social life which imparted new functions and significance to the forms borrowed.[14]

[14] Nylander, 1970, pp. 144 et seq.



FIG. 12. Arachosians at Persopolis. Photo: © Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Eurasien-Abteilung.



FIG. 13. Gandhārans at Persopolis. Photo: © Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Eurasien-Abteilung.

Old Iranian religion

Zoroastrianism, the religion founded by Zoroaster, arose in eastern Iran in the seventh century B.C. It may confidently be stated that Zoroaster lived before the Persians conquered Central Asia. Achaemenid rule is known to have had a profound impact on all the peoples of the Old Persian Empire. Achaemenid administrative and cultural terms were adopted in their languages. But the *Avesta*, the Zoroastrian holy book, bears no trace of Achaemcnid terminology, nor is there any mention of the Achaemcnid money, taxation system or kings.



FIG. 14. Indians at Persopolis. Photo: © Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Eurasien-Abteilung.

The *Avesta* is a composite work. Its earliest parts, the *Gāθās* (*gāθā* = song), differ in form and content from the rest of the book. They were written in verse in an archaic dialect,



FIG. 15. A Persian guardsman at Persopolis. Photo: © Terebenin (Hermitage, St. Petersburg.)



FIG. 16. Silver rhyton, fifth to fourth century B.C. Photo: © Terebenin (Hermitage, St. Petersburg.)



FIG. 17. Horseman in gold. Photo: © Terebenin (Hermitage, St. Petersburg.)



FIG. 18. Gold-handled bowl. Photo: © Terebenin (Hermitage, St. Petersburg.)

being the sermons of Zoroaster himself. He urged his listeners to protect their livestock from the marauding forays of the nomad tribes, opposed the predatory killing of stock and sanguinary mass sacrifices, and instructed every believer to rear and defend useful animals.

The greater part of the book is what is known as the *Younger Avesta*. Its core appears to have been written in the last quarter of the fifth century B.C., and much of it belongs to the still later Arsacid period. Because of its long development Zoroastrianism underwent a complex evolution. According to the *Gāθās*, Zoroaster received from the god Ahura Mazda a mission to renew religion and break with ancient beliefs. He introduced a radical religious reform, accentuating belief in the final victory of Ahura Mazda, rejecting some of the *daēvas* or tribal gods and setting the others below Ahura Mazda. He taught that Ahura Mazda (*Ōrmazd* in Middle Persian) is the sole, omnipotent and ubiquitous god of



FIG. 19. Handle of a silver vessel, Achaemenid period. Photo: © Terebenin (Hermitage, St. Petersburg.)



FIG. 20. Gold square necklace button with Ahura Mazda. Photo: © Terebenin (Hermitage, St. Petersburg.)

good and the incarnation of light, life and truth. He existed before the world and is its creator. From the outset, however, together with Ahura Mazda there existed the evil spirit, Angra Mainyu (*Aŋrō Mainyuš*) or Ahriman, who incarnates darkness and death, and with his *daēva* helpmates, works evil.

Ahura Mazda struggles constantly with Angra Mainyu, relying in that combat on his assistants who incarnate good thought, truth and immortality, the triad of the Zoroastrian ethic. Man was created by Ahura Mazda but is free to choose good or evil, and is



FIG. 21. Seal-ring with winged horned lion. Photo: © Terebenin (Hermitage, St. Petersburg.)

consequently open to the influence of evil spirits. By his thoughts, words and deeds man must resist Angra Mainyu and his adherents, the spirits of evil.

The Zoroastrian priests created a complex eschatology, according to which the world would last 12,000 years. The first 3,000 had been the 'golden age' which knew no cold, heat, sickness, death or ageing. The earth had been full of sheep, goats and cattle. That was the period of Ahura Mazda's reign. Then the 'golden age' came to an end, and Angra Mainyu had created hunger, sikness and death. But a saviour or *saošyant* of Zoroaster's kin would come to the world, and at the end good would triumph over evil and the ideal kingdom would arise, in which Ahura Mazda would hold undivided sway over heaven and earth, the sun would shine for ever and all evil would vanish.

Some time after its birth Zoroastrianism began to spread to Media, Persia and other countries of the Iranian world. But in Persia it began to take hold only towards the end of the sixth century B.C., and the Achaemenid kings, while appreciating the advantages of Zoroaster's teachings as a new established religion, nevertheless did not reject the cults of the ancient tribal gods. Zoroastrianism had not at that time become a dogmatic faith with rigid standards, and, naturally, various modifications of the new religion appeared. With this in mind, Achaemenid religion of the time of Darius I may be said to have been a form of early Zoroastrianism.

The Achaemenids none the less worshipped Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek and other alien gods. In the temples of those gods sacrifices were made in the name of the Persian kings, who wished to attract the benevolence of the local deities. This was due not only to political considerations, but above all to the fact that the ancient religions were not dogmatic or intolerant towards the beliefs of other peoples.

3

ALEXANDER AND HIS SUCCESSORS IN CENTRAL ASIA*

A. H. Dani and P. Bernard

Contents

* See Map 2.

Part One

ALEXANDER'S CAMPAIGN IN CENTRAL ASIA

(*A. H. Dani*)

Alexander advanced into Central Asia in the follow-up operations against the Achaemenid monarch, Darius III Codomannus, whom he had defeated in three successive battles at Granicus (334 B.C.), Issus (333 B.C.) and Gaugamela (331 B.C.). This had fired his imagination to pursue the retreating monarch and to put an end to Achaemenid power by crushing the remaining source of its strength in Central Asia. The eastern forces of the Achaemenids are described in Arrian's *Anabasis* (III.8.3–7):

> The Indians who were coterminous with the Bactrians, as also the Bactrians themselves and the Sogdians, had come to the aid of Darius, all being under the command of Bessus, the satrap of the land of Bactria. They were followed by the Sakas, a Scythian tribe belonging to the Scythians who dwell in Asia. These were not subject to Bessus but were in alliance with Darius. . . . Barsaentes, the satrap of Arachosia, led the Arachosians and the men who were called Mountaineer Indians. . . . There were a few elephants, about fifteen in number, belonging to the Indians who live this side of the Indus. With these forces Darius had encamped at Gaugamela near the River Bumelus, about 600 stades from the city of Arbela.

The elephants probably belonged to Porus, the ruler of Jhelum region, and among the 'Mountaineer Indians' was possibly the local chief Sisicottus who is known to have helped Bessus.[1]

The whole of Central Asia opposed Alexander and resisted his march at every stage. The Achaemenids had built a strong empire and much of Central Asia shared their cultural

[1] Dani, 1980, pp. 117–30.

heritage for some two centuries. It was in defence of this heritage that they rallied against the invaders with courage and strength. Alexander's father Philip had advanced from his native Macedonia, to establish his supremacy over Greece, and had then brought the Greeks of Asia Minor under his control. It fell to the good fortune of his son Alexander to win his first great battle at Granicus, which enabled him to possess the Mediterranean coastal region of Asia. But it was only after his subsequent success at Issus that he could properly measure his growing strength against that of the Achaemenid monarch.

Alexander's motivation

In reply to a letter from Darius, Alexander had declared his political manifesto:

> Your ancestors invaded Macedonia and the rest of Greece, and without provocation inflicted wrongs upon us. I was appointed leader of the Greeks, and crossed over into Asia to avenge these wrongs; for you were the first aggressors.

This motivation of revenge has been construed by some historians[2] as being a 'crusade' against the Persians, but Ghirshman[3] has modified this view. Alexander's failure to capture Darius stirred him to pursue the Achaemenid king and crush his power completely. Military victory was not enough. The change in policy adopted by Alexander to pacify Persia has been explained by Frye [4] and Tarn[5] as the 'fusion of Greeks and Persians, or better, it should be said, Hellenes and Iranians'. This is far from the 'pan-Hellenic ideal' which modern historians had attributed to Alexander. It was this double approach, political and military, that dragged the war into the heart of Asia. If Alexander was to become King of Greece and Persia, he must destroy, root and branch, all the sources of Achaemenid power, and establish a series of strong garrisons right up to the Oxus and Jaxartes. It was in the pursuit of this aim that he won over to his side Sisicottus and welcomed Ophis, ruler of Taxila, who held out the prospect of conquering the Indus region. Alexander was thus lured to the farthest reaches of Achaemenid territory. While he succeeded in destroying Persian power, his death in 323 B.C. put an end to the dream of a Hellenic empire. The struggle in Central Asia roused the dormant spirit of its people. While they were willing to benefit from cultural contacts, they soon threw off the political yoke and absorbed the Greek population that Alexander had left behind in the garrison cities of his new empire.

2 Olmstead, 1948, pp. 495 et seq.
3 Ghirshman, 1954, p. 208.
4 Frye, 1963, p. 127.
5 Tarn, 1951, p. 137.

Alexander's main task and its result

Alexander's campaigns can be divided into several phases. His first object was to pursue the retreating Achaemenid monarch. The second phase was to meet the challenge of the Arians, Arachosians, Bactrians and Sogdians who formed a united opposition and continued to fight even when Bessus was captured and killed. The third phase was the new game of diplomacy and war against the local chiefs of the Indus region, and finally his retreat through the desert of Baluchistan to Susa and Babylon involving the reappraisal of his long, arduous campaigns. The Greek historians (Arrian VI.1 et seq.) have created a myth about his return march from the River Beas and have not given a proper assessment of the situation when Alexander's Greek appointees were either killed or illegally usurped power, while Alexander was busy with his Indus campaigns or on his retreat. It was no surprise that when Alexander unexpectedly died, his faithful commanders fished for power in troubled waters. The Indus region fell to the rise of the Mauryans and later when Seleucus Nicator tried to recover this lost territory, he had further to cede to Candragupta Maurya the provinces of Aria, Arachosia, Gedrosia and the Paropamisadae. Before sixty years had passed, Parthia, Hyrcania and Bactria became independent and rejected the Seleucid hegemony. A fresh power struggle began in Central Asia; a new era of adjustment and cultural assimilation was inaugurated.

The murder of Darius

In the first phase, Darius tried to remuster his forces at Ecbatana (modern Hamadan) and was joined there by Bessus of Bactria, Barsaentes of Arachosia, Satibarzanes of Aria, Nabazarnes, Artabazus and many others including his Greek mercenaries. But Alexander's advance was too swift for Darius to reorganize the support of his eastern provinces. He chose to retreat and paused to fight at the Caspian gates. Here history took a new turn. Alexander usurped the title of the Great King and called himself 'Lord of Asia', disregarding the fact that the Achaemenid monarch was still alive – a signal of great historic change. Although the Greek historians give no details except for the final disowning and, later, the murder of Darius by his eastern commanders (the crime being attributed to Barsaentes and Satibarzanes), the split between the Greek mercenaries of the Achaemenid monarch and the eastern commanders can be seen clearly – a division that may have been brought about by Alexander's own diplomatic moves. The result was the return of the Greek mercenaries and a switch in their loyalty. The eastern commanders, on the other hand, defended their national home, which lay entirely in Central Asia. Bessus emerged as the great leader and retreated to his home province of Bactria to meet Alexander's

challenge. Satibarzanes and Barsaentes returned to their provinces of Aria and Arachosia, respectively, to make defence preparations. Meanwhile Alexander consolidated his gains in the Caspian region. Hyrcania lay at his feet and the Greek deserters submitted to him with the men and material they commanded. He made Zadracarta (modern Astrabad) the headquarters of Hyrcania, the strong centre and spearhead for his conquest of the East.

The fall of Aria and Arachosia

The defence of the East seems to have been well planned. Alexander[6] began to pursue Bessus who, with the support of his people, had assumed the upright tiara and made himself known as 'Great King'. Satibarzanes feigned submission to Alexander and accepted his general Anaxippus and a Macedonian military garrison in Aria. But when the latter arrived, Satibarzanes, with the full support of his people, killed the Greek general along with his whole force. The war of liberation had now begun. Both Aria and Arachosia were up in arms in alliance with Bactria and probably with Sogdiana. Alexander had to forgo his plan of advance on Bactria and turned back to deal with the new situation. We only read about his victorious march to Artacoana, through Aria and further south to Drangiana. But he could not capture the local chieftains. Satibarzanes is said to have gone to Bessus, while Barsaentes left Drangiana and escaped to the 'Indians' in eastern Arachosia, bringing in the new support of the 'Mountaineer Indians'. Here Alexander further changed his policy. He appointed Arsames, a Persian, as satrap of Aria; but while he advanced into Arachosia, this newly appointed satrap proved to be in league with Satibarzanes, and led Aria in a further revolt. Alexander was able to defeat and kill them, putting a new satrap, Stasanor, in charge of Aria. Alexander's advance into Arachosia cannot be explained unless his immediate objective was to capture Barsaentes, who was ultimately caught and put to death. No details are available about the name of the local chief or the resistance that Alexander met; but we do know that he was forced to march round the central massif of Afghanistan, through the Helmand and Arghandab valleys and over the high range of the Hindu Kush simply to reach Bactria – a circuitous journey which was hardly necessary unless dictated by some political or strategic reasons that remain unknown to us. We do however know the measures he adopted to control these provinces. He founded or refounded cities, peopled with a Macedonian and Greek population and strong garrisons, all named after himself – Alexandria in Aria (Herat), Alexandria Prophthasia in Drangiana (Phrada), Alexandropolis (Kandahar), Alexandria in Arachosia (Ghazni) and Alexandria ad Caucasum (now identified with ancient Kāpiśa, modern Begram, near Charikar). This chain of posts, garrisoned

[6] Tarn, 1951, pp. 61 et seq.

by Alexander's own troops, were meant to safeguard the route and cover the rear of his advancing army.

The capture of Bessus

Bessus enjoyed quite a strong position in Bactria, as he had been able to gain the support of Oxyartes and Spitamenes (the two great chiefs of Sogdiana) and of Satibarzanes who had fomented the revolts in Aria. Alexander decided to make a strategic move and take Bessus by surprise. But Bessus was not prepared to give open battle, and withdrew to the other side of the Oxus. Alexander appointed the veteran Artabazus as satrap of Bactria and marched to the Oxus with the intention of crossing the river, but he found that Bessus had destroyed all the boats, followed a scorched-earth policy and joined up with Spitamenes. As Alexander advanced, Spitamenes retreated towards Bukhara, but Bessus stood his ground and was eventually captured.

Resistance in Bactria and its suppression

In a the local chiefs decided to follow a wait-and-strike tactic, and to employ desert manoeuvres. They gained the support of nomads beyond the Jaxartes, and Spitamenes 'found allies in the nomads of the Kyrgyz steppe, west of the Polytimetus river – part of the great Saka confederacy known as the Massagetae'.[7] Initially Alexander occupied Maracanda (Samarkand), the royal summer residence of Sogdiana. Then, worried about the Saka hordes beyond the Jaxartes, he advanced northward past the fortress of Cyropolis occupying seven fortresses on the way to the Jaxartes, the boundary of Achaemenid territory. It was in these engagements that he was wounded in the tibia and lost part of the bone. This fitted in well with the tactics of the local chiefs, which only became known to Alexander when the whole country behind him had risen in revolt. His garrisons in Cyropolis and the seven fortresses were all massacred, and he had to turn back to reconquer this territory. Meanwhile Spitamenes, who had retired into the desert, besieged the citadel of Maracanda, and the Saka nomads, who were allies of Spitamenes, swarmed round the Jaxartes. This was the first time that Alexander was faced with a new encircling tactic by the Sakas. He established a strong garrison on the Jaxartes by founding Alexandria Eschate (Alexandria the Farthest), now identified with Khojand. He then crossed the river and broke through the encircling Sakas with the help of his archers and cavalry. Alexander had sent his commander Pharnuches, a Lycian, to relieve Maracanda. Spitamenes withdrew

[7] Ibid., p. 69.

down-river and lured the Macedonian force after him to the edge of the desert. This gave Spitamenes his opportunity to make a frontal attack and driving the whole Macedonian force back to the river he annihilated it and again besieged Maracanda. Alexander had to rush personally to relieve the town and although he was able to destroy the harvest of the countryside, Spitamenes' desert tactics proved more than a match for him. Alexander was obliged to retreat to Bactria while Spitamenes celebrated his victory at Bukhara, the royal winter residence of Sogdiana. Alexander consolidated his position in Bactria and received large reinforcements from his home country and from the satraps he had appointed in the western provinces. He was joined by Pharasmanes, the ruler of Chorasmia south of the Aral Sea, who was probably won over because of his opposition to Spitamenes, and by Sisicottus, an older friend of Bessus. It was here also that Ophis, the ruler of Taxila, jealous of his powerful neighbour, Porus, came to offer his alliance, opening up before Alexander the rosy picture of the conquest of the Indus valley. Alexander 'assumed the state of Great King, surrounded himself with eastern forms and pomp, exacted self-abasement in his presence from oriental subjects, and adopted the maxim that the king's person was divine. He was the successor of Darius.'[8]

The conquest of Transoxania

The territory north of the Oxus had yet to be conquered. Spitamenes was a strong force in Sogdiana, and four other chiefs – Oxyartes, Chorienes, Catanes and Austanes – were in arms in the Paraetacene (modern Hissar) hills. Alexander himself advanced, dividing the army into five columns, which swept across the plains and reunited at Maracanda. While Alexander was building fortified garrisons at various points, Spitamenes, in league with the Sakas, overwhelmed a Bactrian border post and appeared before Bactra itself. In the winter of 328 B.C., Alexander put Coenus in charge of western Sogdiana with two battalions of the phalanx, two squadrons of the Companions (his personal bodyguard), and the newly raised Bactrian and Sogdian horse. Spitamenes, helped by the Massagetae, attacked him but by now Coenus had mastered his tactics and was able to overpower and defeat Spitamenes. We do not know what diplomatic moves followed, but we read of the estrangement of the Sogdians from Spitamenes and their surrender to Alexander. Later the Massagetae lost heart, cut off Spitamenes' head and sent it to Alexander. Thus was the end of the great defender of Sogdiana. Alexander arranged for Spitamenes' daughter Apama to be married to Seleucus Nikator, and she became the mother of Antiochus I. Alexander was not yet master of the whole of Sogdiana. While he held the plains, the great chiefs were strong in the hills.

[8] Tarn, 1951, p. 77.

Late in 328 Alexander advanced to Oxyartes' stronghold, 'the Sogdian rock' near Derbend, which was very strongly defended. Oxyartes was not present. While we read of Alexander's assault on the rock and its surrender, we have no details of Oxyartes' reconciliation except that his captured daughter Roxane was married to Alexander. The way in which Oxyartes was made to accompany Alexander to the siege of other strongholds suggests that some historical facts have not been recorded and a deliberate tradition was established that Alexander had fallen in love with Roxane. Later when we find Oxyartes securing the surrender of Chorienes, who had a strong fort on the Vakhsh river south of Faizabad, his political role should be clearly understood. As we note later that the same Oxyartes was made satrap of the Paropamisadae, the political trend becomes clear. Alexander did not himself advance to subdue the two remaining chiefs of the hills but entrusted the task to Craterus who was successful in his mission.

Alexander's allies from the Indus region

It was in Bactria that Alexander planned to conquer the Indus provinces of the Achaemenid Empire.[9] Three local chiefs had their own reasons for supporting him. One of these, Sisicottus, came from Swat, and was later rewarded by an appointment in this locality. Sangaeus from Gandhāra had a grudge against his brother Astis, and to improve his own chances of royalty, sided with Alexander. The ruler of Taxila wanted to satisfy his own grudge against Porus. In this way Alexander's new push towards the Indus was preceded by considerable diplomatic activity, of which very little is known. Whether his original intention was to explore the southern sea is difficult to say, but his advance in that direction and the information he received from local chiefs must have increased his curiosity. However, to say that mere curiosity brought him to this part of the world would be wide of the mark. Certainly such curiosity cost him dear, and the assistance of the local chieftains was of no great consequence from a military point of view.

Alexander's route to the Indus

In the early summer of 327 B.C. Alexander started from Bactra and found to his surprise his city of Alexandria ad Caucasum in some disorder. Arrian (IV.22.6–8) gives details of his route from Alexandria to the Indus, the strategy he followed and the help he received from local chieftains. Taxiles and the others came to meet him, bringing gifts reckoned of value among the Indians. They presented him with the twenty-five elephants they had

[9] Dani, 1980, pp. 117–30.

with them. Alexander divided his army, sending Hephaestion and Perdiccas into the land of Peucelaotis, towards the River Indus with the brigades of Gorgias, Clitus and Meleager, half of the Companion cavalry, and the entire cavalry of Greek mercenaries. He gave them instructions to capture by force places en route, or to compel them to capitulate; and when they reached the Indus, they were to make all necessary preparations for the passage of the army. Taxiles and the other chiefs marched with them. When they reached the Indus they carried out all Alexander's orders but Astis, the ruler of Peucelaotis, revolted, bringing ruin on himself and on the city to which he had fled for refuge, when Hephaestion captured it after a siege of thirty days. As far as the route is concerned, P. H. L. Eggermont,[10] relying on the *Geography* of Strabo, makes Alexander cross the Cophen (Kabul) river but this is not borne out by other historians. If Alexander crossed the Kabul river, the only route open for him was thorough the Khyber pass – a route that he definitely avoided because that it lacked water and was less inhabited. It is therefore reasonable to believe that Alexander marched north of the Kabul river across the Ningrahar valley into Bajaur. It is also clear that Hephaestion and Perdiccas, who were sent ahead, did not follow the Khyber route. As their target was Peucelaotis (modern Charsadda, north of the Kabul river), they must have come down through Mohmand territory. Both routes lay north of the Kabul river and clearly indicate the stategy followed by Alexander. Peucelaotis was occupied with the help of Sangaeus and Taxiles, but not without a great fight against Astis. Alexander himself went north. We are not informed who was his guide, but as we hear later that Sisicottus, a chief of this great region, was appointed to administer the area, it is reasonable to believe that Alexander must have followed his advice. Arrian (IV.23) calls this 'the land of the Aspasians, Guraeans and Assacenians'. In modern geographical terminology, it embraces Nawagai, Bajaur, Dir and Swat.

The battle with the Aspasians

The way was now blocked by the Aspasians, who followed a scorched-earth policy and gave Alexander a tough fight, finally retreating into their mountain fastness. Arrian (IV.24.6–25, 4) describes it thus:,

> Then crossing the mountains Alexander descended to a city called Arigaeum [identified with Nawagai], and found that this had been set on fire by the inhabitants, who had afterwards fled. There Craterus with his army reached him, after accomplishing all the king's orders; and because this city seemed to be built in a convenient place, he directed that general to fortify it well, and settle in it as many of the neighbouring people as were willing to live there, together with any of the soldiers who were unfit for service. He then advanced to the place

[10] Eggermont, 1970, pp. 63 et seq.

> where he heard that most of the barbarians of the district had fled for refuge. ... When the enemy who were occupying the commanding heights saw the Macedonians approaching they descended into the plain, being emboldened by their superiority in number and despising the Macedonians, because they were seen to be few. A sharp contest ensued; but Alexander won the victory with ease. ... Ptolemy indeed says that all the men were captured, to a number exceeding 40,000 and that over 2,300,000 oxen were also taken, of which Alexander picked out the finest, because they seemed to him to excel both in beauty and size, wishing to send them to Macedonia to till the soil.

That such a great booty in cattle was collected shows the great prosperity of the region and the reason why the local tribe put up such a stiff resistance.

Fight with the Assacenians

Alexander then crossed the River Guraeus (the Panchkora, in Dir District). Beyond the Karmani pass lies the Talash valley. The Assacenians, identified with the Aśvakas of Sanskrit literature, tried to defend themselves. According to Arrian (IV.25.7–26,1):

> When the barbarians perceived Alexander approaching, they durst not take their stand for a battle in close array, but dispersed one by one to their various cities with the determination of preserving these by fighting from the ramparts. The most important of them was Massaga.

The ponderous ruins of Massaga occupy a conspicuous height near Ziarat about 16 km north of Chakdara fort. Here on a bare hill the walls of later-period ramparts have stood through the centuries to speak of the brave defence that the people put up against Alexander, as described by Quintus Curtius (VIII.10.23–9):

> An army of 38,000 infantry defended the city which was strongly fortified both by nature and art. For on the east, an impetuous mountain stream with steep banks on both sides barred approach to the city, while to south and west nature, as if designing to form a rampart, had piled up gigantic rocks, at the base of which lay sloughs and yawning chasms hollowed in the course of ages to vast depths, while a ditch of mighty labour drawn from their extremity continued the line of defence. The city was besides surrounded with a wall thirty-five stadia in circumference which had a basis of stonework supporting a superstructure of unburnt, sun-dried bricks. The brickwork was bound into a solid fabric by means of stones so interposed that the more brittle material rested upon the harder, while moist clay had been used for mortar. Lest, however, the structure should sink, strong beams had been laid on top, supporting wooden floors which covered the walls and afforded a passage along them.
>
> Alexander while reconnoitring the fortifications, and unable to fix on a plan of attack, since nothing less than a vast mole, necessary for bringing up his engines to the walls, would suffice to fill up the chasms, was wounded from the ramparts by an arrow which chanced to hit him in the calf of the leg. When the barb was extracted, he called for his horse, and without having his wound so much as bandaged, continued with unabated energy to prosecute the work on

> hand. But when the injured limb was hanging without support and the gradual cooling, as the blood dried, aggravated the pain, he is reported to have said that though he was called, as all know, the son of Jupiter, he felt notwithstanding all the defects of the weak body. He did not, however, return to the camp till he had viewed everything and ordered what he wanted to be done.

It was at Massaga that we learn of Alexander's ploy. After the besieged had agreed to surrender, Diodorus (XVII.84.1) informs us:

> When the capitulation on those terms had been ratified by oaths, the Queen [of Massaga], to show her admiration of Alexander's magnanimity, sent out to him most valuable presents, with an intimation that she would fulfil all the stipulations. Then the mercenaries at once, in accordance with the terms of the agreement, evacuated the city, and after retiring to a distance of eighty stadia, pitched their camp unmolested, without thought of what was to happen. But Alexander, who was actuated by an implacable enmity against the mercenaries, and had kept his troops under arms ready for action, pursued the barbarians, and falling suddenly upon them made a great slaughter of their ranks. The barbarians at first loudly protested that they were attacked in violation of sworn obligation, and invoked the gods whom he had desecrated by taking false oaths in their name. Alexander, with a loud voice, retorted that his covenant merely bound him to let them depart from the city, and was by no means a league of perpetual amity between them and the Macedonians. The mercenaries, undismayed by the greatness of their danger, drew their ranks together in a ring, within which they placed the women and children to guard them on all sides against their assailants. As they were now desperate, and by their audacity and feats of valour made the conflict in which they closed hot work for the enemy, while the Macedonians held it a point of honour not to be outdone in courage by a horde of barbarians, great was the astonishment and alarm which the peril of this crisis created. For as the combatants were locked together fighting hand to hand, death and wounds were dealt out in every variety and form. Thus the Macedonians, when once their long spikes had shattered the shield of the barbarians, pierced their vital organs with the steel points of these weapons, and on the other hand the mercenaries never hurled their javelins without deadly effect against the near target presented by the dense ranks of the enemy. When many were thus wounded and not a few killed, the women, taking the arms of the fallen, fought side by side with the men for the imminence of the danger and the great interests at stake forced them to do violence to their nature, and to take an active part in the defence. Accordingly some who had supplied themselves with arms did their best to cover their husbands with their shields, while others who were without arms did much to impede the enemy by flinging themselves upon them and catching hold of their shields. The defenders, however, after fighting desperately, along with their wives, were at last overpowered by superior numbers, and met a glorious death which they would have disdained to exchange for a life with dishonour.

Massaga was only one of the fortress cities of the Assacenians. Two more places of great importance were then the target of attack. Arrian continues (IV.27.5–28,1):

> Thence he dispatched Coenus to Bazira, entertaining an opinion that the inhabitants would surrender when they heard of the capture of Massaga. He also dispatched Attalus, Alcetas, and Demetrius, the cavalry officer, to another city, named Ora, with instructions to blockade it until he himself arrived. The men of this city made a sortie against the forces of Alcetas; but the Macedonians easily routed them, and drove them into the city within the wall. But affairs at Bazira were not favourable to Coenus, for the inhabitants showed no sign of capitulating, trusting to the strength of the place, because not only was it situated on a lofty eminence, but it was also thoroughly fortified all round. When Alexander learnt this, he started off to Bazira, but ascertaining that some of the neighbouring barbarians were about to get into the city of Ora by stealth, being dispatched thither by Abisares for that very purpose, he first marched to Ora. He ordered Coenus to fortify a certain strong position to serve as a basis of operations against the city of Bazira, and then to come to him with the rest of his army, after leaving in that place a sufficient garrison to restrain the men in the city from enjoying the free use of their land. But when the men of Bazira saw Coenus departing with the larger part of his army, they despised the Macedonians, as not being able to contend with them, and sallied forth into the plain. A sharply contested battle ensued, in which 500 of the barbarians fell and over seventy were taken prisoner. But the rest, fleeing for refuge into the city, were now more securely shut off from the country by the men in the fort. The siege of Ora proved an easy matter to Alexander, for he no sooner attacked the walls than at the first assault he got possession of the city, and captured the elephants which had been left there. When the men in Bazira heard the news, despairing of their own affairs, they abandoned the city about the middle of the night, and fled to the rock which is in their land, and is called Aornos.

Both these forts lie on the left bank of the River Swat and to attack them Alexander's forces had to cross the river. Stein[11] identified Ora with Udegram and Bazira with Barikot. From Udegram retreat upstream along the Swat river was possible, but if Udegram had already fallen to Alexander, the only escape from Bazira to Buner was across the Karakar pass. Abisares' forces could reach either place through this pass as Alexander was coming from across the river. As a stand was not possible, the forces must have planned to retreat to Buner where they could again get help from Abisares, who must have been planning to stop Alexander on that side of the River Indus. Although the Greek historians relate that the Assacenians were defeated, they were not conquered, but took up new positions at Aornos.

The very fact that Alexander did not advance directly to Aornos suggests that by then he was well aware of the geography of the terrain where the local chiefs had taken refuge and was well guided by other local chiefs. Who were these local chiefs and what was their affiliation? We know the names of two of them – Cophaeus (probably a ruler of the lower Kabul valley) and Assagates (probably Aśvagupta) – but they are not heard of again, except in connection with Alexander's march towards Aornos.

[11] Stein, 1929.

Arrian informs us that Alexander fortified Ora and Massaga to keep the land in subjection and also the city of Bazira. He appointed Nicanor as 'viceroy of the land on this side of the River Indus', fortifying yet another city, Orobatis, generally identified with Varuṣa (modern Shahbazgarhi, in Mardan District) where the Aśokan rock edicts are to be found. As it lies in a strategic position that could be used as a base for operations against enemy forces in Buner, its fortification can be well understood. It was probably here that Alexander planned his future campaign to dislodge his enemies from Aornos and to prevent Abisares from interfering in the region.

The capture of Aornos

Stein[12] takes 'Aornos' to be linguistically identical with (Mount) Una on the Indus in the Indus Kohistan, near Thakot on the modern Karakorum highway; but 'Buner' could be a corrupted form of 'Aornos'. In that case, any high peak in Buner (and there are several) could be identified with this last siege. Alexander was bent on taking possession of Aornos, towards which he now moved. The first city he reached is called Embolima, which is identified with ancient Ambulima. Stein takes it for Amb because it is situated on the route to Mount Una following closely the River Indus. On the other hand Eggermont[13] identifies it with Ambela, an important pass that can be reached from Shahbazgarhi. Both are strategically located. As a good strategist Alexander left the experienced Craterus with part of the army and himself advanced towards Aornos. If Aornos was situated on the right bank of the Indus, as the narratives of Diodorus and Curtius state, one alternative would be to accept its identification with Pirsar on Mount Una, which can be reached from Amb along the river, or from Ambela through the Kaghlum and Chakesar passes. But it is difficult to understand how he could get to Pirsar by the latter route when Erices (Assacenus' brother) was holding the district of the Assacenians, which was Buner itself. Classical historians would have us believe that Alexander tackled Erices after capturing Aornos. Eggermont would have Erices take refuge on Mount Elam, if he could be identified with the leader of the forces fleeing from Barikot, because Elam lies to the north-west by the side of the Karakar pass. In either case the capture of Aornos was part of Alexander's Buner campaign, and it was after this victory that he fortified the place, 'committing the superintendence of the garrison to Sisicottus' (Arrian IV.30.4). After such an arduous campaign Alexander was finally able to subjugate the Assacenians and the whole area west of the Indus. When Nicanor

[12] Stein, 1929.
[13] Eggermont, 1970, pp. 63 et seq.

was appointed viceroy we read of two local chiefs, Sangaeus in Peucelaotis and Sisicottus (Sasigupta) in the farthest corner of Buner.

Alexander and Taxila

After his arduous Buner campaign Alexander returned to cross the Indus at the point where a bridge had been built. Arrian (V.3.5) describes his activities:,

> When Alexander arrived at the River Indus, he found a bridge made over it by Hephaestion, and two thirty-oared galleys, besides many smaller craft. He moreover found that 200 talents of silver, 3,000 oxen, above 10,000 sheep for sacrificial victims, and thirty elephants had arrived as gifts from the Indian Taxiles; 700 Indian horsemen also arrived from Taxiles as a reinforcement, and that prince sent word that he would surrender to him the city of Taxila, the largest town between the Rivers Indus and Hydaspes.

Arrian (V.8.2 et seq.) continues the story:

> Then starting from the Indus, he arrived at Taxila, a large and prosperous city, in fact the largest of those situated between the Rivers Indus and Hydaspes. He was received in a friendly manner by Taxiles, the governor of the city, and by the Indians of that place; and he added to that territory as much of the adjacent country as they asked for. Thither also came to him envoys from Abisares, King of the Mountaineer Indians, the embassy including the brother of Abisares as well as the other most notable men. Other envoys came from Doxares, the chief of the province, bringing gifts with them. Here again at Taxila Alexander offered the sacrifices which were customary for him to offer, and celebrated a gymnastic and equestrian contest. Having appointed Philippus, son of Machetas, viceroy of the Indians of that district, he left a garrison in Taxila, as well as the soldiers who were invalidated by sickness, and then marched towards the River Hydaspes.

It is very significant that Arrian calls Abisares 'King of the Mountaineer Indians'. If this information is correct, should we not suppose that the forces of the Mountaineer Indians who fought at Gaugamela were sent by him – an inference supported by the fact that Abisares had opposed Alexander all along, while his enemy, Omphis, had been on Alexander's side? Abisares, who had sent his troops to support the Assacenians in Ora and Buner against Alexander, now sent only his embassy of goodwill to Taxila and never went in person to attend on Alexander, who nevertheless tacitly accepted the pretence of submission. Quintus Curtius (VIII.12.12–16) gives more information:

> When Alexander asked him [Omphis] whether he had more husbandmen or soldiers, he replied that as he was at war with two kings he required more soldiers than field labourers. These kings were Abisares and Porus, but Porus was superior in power and influence. Both of them held sway beyond the River Hydaspes, and had resolved to try the fortune of war whatever invader had come. Omphis, with Alexander's permission, and according to the

> usage of the realm, assumed the ensigns of royalty along with the name which his father had borne. His people called him Taxiles, for such was the name which accompanied the sovereignty on whomsoever it devolved. When, therefore, he had entertained Alexander for three days with lavish hospitality, he showed him on the fourth day what quality of corn he had supplied to Hephaestion's troops, and then presented him and all his friends with golden crowns, and eighty talents besides of coined silver. Alexander was so exceedingly gratified with his profuse generosity that he not only sent back to Omphis the presents he had given, but added a thousand talents from the spoils which he carried, along with many banqueting vessels of gold and silver, a vast quantity of Persian drapery, and thirty chargers from his own stalls, caparisoned as when ridden by himself.

Quintus Curtius (VIII.13.3) informs us:

> Alexander had now resolved to cross the Hydaspes, when Barsaentes, who had instigated the Arachosians to revolt, was brought to him in chains, along with thirty captured elephants. . . . Samaxus was also brought in chains, the king of a small Indian state, who had espoused the cause of Barsaentes. Alexander, having put the traitor and his accomplice under custody, and consigned the elephants to the care of Taxiles, advanced to the River Hydaspes.

This information brings a new perspective of the battle at Gaugamela *vis-à-vis* the princes from the Indus region. It is not clear where Barsaentes was caught, but if the identification of Samaxus with Sambus in Sind (as suggested by Eggermont) is accepted we can understand the purpose of the entire campaign of Alexander in the Indus region; and the capture of Barsaentes at this stage does focus on the part that was played by the princes from the Indus region in the great battle at Gaugamela.

To these events Plutarch adds:

> Alexander, therefore, after having received many presents from Taxiles, and given him more in return, at last drank to his health, and accompanied the toast with the present of a thousand talents of coined money.

At this time in Taxila there was a certain Kauṭilya, the author of the well-known book on Indian policy, the *Arthaśāstra* who was to become famous as the teacher of Candragupta, the founder of the Mauryan Empire. Plutarch records:,

> Sandrocottos [Candragupta] himself, who was then but a youth, saw Alexander and afterwards used to declare that Alexander could easily have taken possession of the whole country, since the king [i.e. one of the Nanda kings of the Gangetic valley] was hated and despised by his subjects for the wickedness of his disposition and the meanness of his origin.

Justin (XV.4.15) adds:

> This man was of humble origin, but was stimulated to aspire to regal power by supernatural encouragement; for having offended Alexander by his boldness of speech and orders being given to kill him, he saved himself by swiftness of foot.

Unfortunately we do not know when and where Candragupta met Alexander, but as he was in Taxila, that is the most likely place of their meeting.

Alexander and Porus

From Taxila to the Hydaspes Alexander had the choice of two main roads. Either would be practicable provided the passes were in the hands of allies. The principal chain of the Salt range commences in the lofty hills of Chel formed by the convergence of three spurs, two of which extended as far as the Himalayan out-liers. The first is traversed by the Grand Trunk Road at Bakrala and, 32 km lower down, by the Dhudial-to-Jalalpur road at the gap through which the Bunhar Nullah flows. The spur on which the fort of Rohtas stands is terminated at one end by the Bunhar and at the other by the Nuhan Nullah, which flows through the Pubbi range near the apex of the triangle. The lower road, which emerges near Jalalpur, is narrow and was perhaps under the control of Sopeithes, while the northern route – the Grand Trunk Road – was under Abisares' control. The route followed by Alexander depended upon the relationship of these two chiefs to Porus. In spite of his feigned submission to Alexander, Abisares was ready to support Porus with whom he was in league, and therefore the northern route appears to have been less preferred. On the other hand, Sopeithes, the ruler of the Salt range, was too weak to stand against Alexander and more likely to yield. On this ground the southern route was preferable, as Stein has argued on other, geographical, grounds. On the other side of the Hydaspes (Jhelum) lay the Kingdom of Porus (Fig. 1). The name appears to have been derived from the ancient Puru tribe, which at this time must have spread from Jhelum eastward beyond Chenab, probably up to the River Ravi, because the younger Porus, nephew of the former, ruled here. He was antagonistic to his uncle and is reported to have offered Alexander help against him, hoping to be installed as ruler over the whole area. The territory of the elder Porus between the

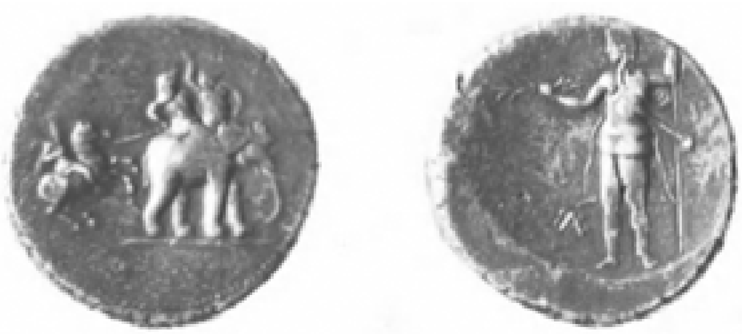


FIG. 1. Silver coin with the figure of Porus (BMC 191, 61). Photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Jhelum and Chenab was well defended. Strabo tells us that it was an extensive and fertile district containing nearly 300 cities. Diodorus mentions that Porus had an army of more than 50,000 foot soldiers, about 300 horses, over 1,000 chariots and 130 elephants. The story of the battle against Porus is related in detail by the Greek historians.

The special strategic moves made by Alexander for the battle, the severity with which the battle was fought, the daredevil courage shown by Porus, and his final treatment by Alexander indicate the importance of the war. It appears that all along Porus was the main target of attack on this side of the Indus, just as the Assacenians had been on the other. As Sisicottus was Alexander's supporter on the west, so Omphis was on the east, while Abisares played a political game on both fronts. As we shall see later, he not only saved his life but preserved his territory and never submitted personally to Alexander.

After his victory over Porus, Alexander (Fig. 2) founded the city of Nicaca, as well as another city, Bucephala, in memory of his horse Bucephalus, who died there. Alexander not only restored his territory to Porus but also added the neighbouring region beyond the Chenab that belonged to the 'Glausians' and as far as the Ravi, where the younger Porus had risen in revolt as his uncle had been honoured by Alexander. At a campsite in this area Alexander effected a reconciliation between Taxiles and Porus. And there arrived a second ambassador from Abisares, who, seeing the failure of his political manoeuvres, again feigned submission by sending his brother with a gift of forty elephants. It is strange that even then he did not come in person. We are told:

> At this time Phrataphernes, viceroy of Parthia and Hyrcania, came to Alexander at the head of the Thracians who had been left with him. Messengers also came from Sisicottus, the viceroy of the Assacenians, to inform him that these people had slain their governor [Nicanor] and revolted from Alexander. Against these he dispatched Philippus [the viceroy of Taxila region] and Tyriespis, with an army, to arrange and set in order the affairs of their land.

This was the first revolt by local people in the territory of the Assacenians.

It was on the banks of the Ravi that Alexander met the Cathaeans (with their stronghold at Sangala). There were many other independent tribes between the Ravi and the Beas. In these campaigns Porus accompanied Alexander and helped him with the elephants. After a great siege Sangala was captured and razed to the ground. Alexander advanced up to the Beas which was probably the limit of the Achaemenid Empire. Beyond lay the Gangetic kingdom of the Great Nandas.

Alexander's retreat

We are informed that here the Greek soldiers revolted and would not proceed further to conquer the Gangetic region. Although Alexander unwillingly acceded to their demands,



FIG. 2. Head of Alexander the Great. Sculpture. Photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

it is strange that they did not insist on returning by the route they had come. Was this story of revolt concocted by the Greek historians to put all the blame on the soldiers and prove that Alexander wished to be a world conqueror but stopped at the limit of the Achaemenid

Empire? The army certainly stood by him so long as he was only subjugating the lands that had belonged to the Achaemenids. If the army only wanted an easy return home, it is difficult to understand why Alexander tackled new hazards by going south.

It is said that Alexander made Abisares viceroy over his own country and the region belonging to Arsaces. Thus to the east of the Indus, Porus and Abisares, who were enemies of Taxiles, were made stronger. On the other hand Philippus, who was appointed 'viceroy of the district' at Taxila, became 'viceroy of the country beyond the Indus extending to Bactria' after the murder of Nicanor. Later his authority was extended up to the territory of the Malli, that is, to the confluence of the Indus and the Chenab. Beyond this point as far as the sea, and extending over the Makran coast, Pithon was appointed viceroy; but that area remained to be conquered. Meanwhile Alexander went back to the River Hydaspes.

Alexander fights his way to the South

Arrian (II.1.1–2,2) continues the story:

> Alexander now resolved to sail down the Hydaspes to the Great Sea, after he had prepared on the bank of that river many thirty-oared galleys and others with one and a half banks of oars, as well as a number of vessels for conveying horses, and all the other things requisite for the easy conveyance of an army on a river. . . . With himself he placed on board all the shield-bearing guards, the archers, the Agrianians and the bodyguard of the cavalry. Craterus led a part of the infantry along the right bank of the Hydaspes, while along the other bank Hephaestion advanced at the head of the most numerous and efficient part of the army, including the elephants, which now numbered about 200. These generals were ordered to march as quickly as possible to the place where the palace of Sopeithes was situated.

They reached this on the second day.

Alexander then proceeded down the Jhelum to its confluence with the Chenab. In the southern Panjab he had to fight against four tribes – the Sibi, Agalassi (Diodorus XVII.98), Sudracae and Malli. The Sibi occupied the Shorkot region in Jhang District, and the Agalassi (or the Agrasura) must have been close neighbours. The other two tribes, the Malli (or Mālavas) and the Sudracac (*Śudraka* or *Kṣudraka*), made a joint defence against Alexander. It was in the fortress city of the Malli, which was heavily defended, that Alexander was badly wounded. The city seems to have been Mālavasthāna (probably modern Multan) and the Sudracae must have lived in the Bahawalpur region northward along the Ravi.

The onward journey to the sea was interrupted by two more geographical features – the great Indus gorge at Sakkhar and the head of the delta below the hillock of Thatta. In the first area Alexander met two important tribes, that of Musicanus, probably with their

headquarters at Al-Ror, near Sakkhar, and the second of Sambus, with their city called Sindimana. In the name 'Musicanus' it is not difficult to see the ancient tribe of Mūṣikas, or Mauṣikas, and in the name 'Sambus' the later Sindhi tribe, Sammas. It is said that the Brahmans instigated their fight against Alexander, who defeated them and destroyed their cities.

The next important place was Patala, where 'the water of the Indus is divided into two large rivers, both of which retain the name of Indus as far as the sea. Here Alexander constructed a harbour and a dockyard.' Quintus Curtius (1X.8.28) further writes:

> From there they came to the next nation, that of the Patalii. Their king was Moeris, who had abandoned his city and taken refuge in the mountains. Alexander took the town and pillaged the fields. From there great booty was driven off, in the form of flocks and herds, and a great store of grain was found. Then taking guides acquainted with the river he sailed down to an island which arose in the middle of the channel.

There has been a vain attempt to identify the city of Patala. If 'Patala' is not taken as a proper name but only refers to a city, it can be corrected to 'Pattana', that is, city or port city *par excellence*, a term applied in a later period to Thatta, which is ideally situated in the way the Greek historians describe. King Moeris has been taken by Eggermont to be Mauryas – but without any reasonable foundation, and he is better regarded as the head of the local tribe Med or Mehr, which is well known in the Sind coastal area.

Alexander marches back across Baluchistan

When the exploration of the Indus was complete, Alexander prepared for the return journey. He had already, according to Arrian (VI.17.3),

> sent Craterus into Carmania with brigades of Attalus, Meleager and Antigenes, some of the archers and as many of the Companions and other Macedonians as, being now unfit for military service, he was dispatching to Macedonia by the route through the lands of Arachosians and Zarangians.

Eggermont rightly points out the line of march along the ancient caravan trail from Al-Ror through the Bolan pass to Kandahar and from there to Sistan. According to Strabo (613.3 et seq.), Alexander

> himself set out with one division through Gedrosia. He kept away from the sea, no more than 500 stadia at most, in order that he might at the same time equip the seaboard for the reception of his fleet; and he often closely approached the sea, although its shores were hard to traverse and rugged.

The fleet he gave over to Nearchus and Onesicritus, the latter his master pilot, giving them orders to take an appropriate position, and to follow, and sail alongside, his line of march.

Alexander's retreat from the Indus delta has been reconstructed by Eggermont who has evaluated the two possible routes – the northern one, suggested by Stein, and the southern one given by Holditch. He has opted for the latter to identify the port town of Alexandria in the Oreitae country near the mouth of the Hingol river – the most important river in Baluchistan, separating the eastern part held by the Oreitae tribe from the western part – Gedrosia proper. Alexander entered via the River Arabis (the Hab river flowing between the Kirthar and Pab ranges that run in a north-south direction). The focal point here is the central Kalat area, the southern part of which is drained by the Porali river. The Oreitae tribe appears to have occupied this entire zone. They put up a stout resistance and rose in revolt after the departure of Alexander, but were brought to book by Leonnatus. Even later, Diodorus (XVII.105.8) informs us, when Alexander 'was on the march, some of the Oreitae, having attacked the troops commanded by Leonnatus and slain a good many men, escaped unscathed into their own country'.

Arrian (VI.27.1–2) tells the story of Alexander's last appointments:

> When he arrived at the capital of the Gedrosians he gave his army a rest. Apollophanes he deposed from his satrapy because he found out that he had utterly disregarded his instructions. He appointed Thoas to be satrap over the people of this district, but as he was taken ill and later died, Sibyrtius occupied the vacant post. The same man had also recently been appointed by Alexander satrap of Carmania, but now the government of the Arachosians and Gedrosians was committed to him, and Tlepolemus, the son of Pythophanes, got Carmania. The king was already advancing into Carmania when tidings reached him that Philippus, satrap of the Indian Country, had been treacherously murdered by the mercenaries; but that his Macedonian bodyguards had put to death his murderers whom they had caught in the very act, and others whom they had afterwards seized. On learning what had occurred he sent a letter to India addressed to Eudemus and Taxiles directing them to assume the administration of the province previously governed by Philippus until he could send a satrap to govern it.

That opportunity never came. The finale of Alexander's march is given in the words of Justin (XV.l.10–15):

> Seleucus Nicator waged many wars in the east after the partition of Alexander's empire among his generals. He first took Babylon and then with his forces augmented by victory subjugated the Bactrians. He then passed over into India, which after Alexander's death, as if the yoke of servitude had been shaken off from its neck, had put its prefects to death. Sandrocottus was the leader who achieved their freedom, but after his victory he forfeited by his tyranny all title to the name of the liberator, for he oppressed with servitude the very people whom he had emancipated from foreign thraldom.

Alexander's last days

Alexander returned to Susa only to find that the satraps appointed by him had enrolled mercenaries and acted as independent rulers while some of the Persian satraps had ill-used and murdered their subjects. 'One trouble, a revolt of Greek mercenaries in Bactria, was not really overcome; Amyntas was replaced by another Philippus, but the discontent simmered till Alexander died.'[14] Alexander was struck down by fever and died in Babylon on 13 June 323 B.C.

How far Alexander succeeded in uniting his empire is difficult to say because the men that he posted as satraps in the different provinces could not remain in power after his death. He certainly succeeded in bridging the rift between the Greek and Persian worlds, and, by bringing the two into one imperial system, he fulfilled the aim that once inspired the Achaemenids; the voyage of his admiral Nearchus must have added information to that already gained by Skylax in the time of Darius I, and the new silver currency issued by Alexander must have accelerated trade and commerce. The new cities he founded in Asia, and the Greek population he settled in them, planted the seeds of Hellenistic culture and inaugurated a new spirit of cultural exchange.

However, the empire that he founded did not survive him. Its unity was destroyed, and for forty years after his death his own companions and comrades indulged in mutual strife. The one who emerged successful in Asia was Seleucus Nicator. The major claim to independence from the Seleucids came from the Indus region where Candragupta Maurya, with the support of the Parvataka (probably the Paurava tribe), overthrew the Greeks and gained the provinces of Aria, Arachosia, Gedrosia and the Paropamisadae, almost all the eastern areas where troubles had been brewing in Alexander's lifetime. Within half a century the Seleucids lost Parthia and Hyrcania, provinces situated to the south-east and east of the Caspian Sea, and probably at about the same time Bactria threw off their suzerainty. The Seleucids continued to control Iran until the Roman menace roused the national consciousness of the Iranians. The Parthians gave the final signal, recovering Iran from the Greeks and stabilizing their western frontier on the Euphrates.

[14] Tarn, 1951, p. 110.

Part Two

THE SELEUCIDS IN CENTRAL ASIA

(*Paul Bernard*)

Rare as they are for this period, historical sources and coins help to pierce the darkness surrounding the fate of the Greek colonies in Central Asia during the twenty years between the death of Alexander (323 B.C.) and the conquest of Central Asia by Seleucus I (*c*. 305–304 B.C.). The survival of this Greek presence in regions far away from the Mediterranean and apparently isolated is primarily explained by the fact that it had put down roots. Even if we reject the theory of a genuine Greek colonization prior to Alexander of political exiles settled in these provinces by the Achaemenid kings,[15] it is nevertheless evident that the number of colonists left behind by Alexander was far from negligible. Classical texts mention 13,500 soldiers in the Oxus valley (Arrian IV.22) and 4,600 in Arachosia alone (Curtius VII.3–4), the centre of troop disposition south of the Hindu Kush. To this number must be added the pensioned soldiers, who were settled in the newly founded towns, as the conquest progressed.

Alexander's death and its aftermath

The announcement of Alexander's death caused 23,000 Greek mercenaries settled, no doubt against their will, in the upper satrapies of the Iranian plateau and in Central Asia to rebel and attempt to return to their distant homeland (Diodorus XVIII.7).[16] But the dead king's lieutenants, who had sided with the regent Perdiccas, immediately instructed the general responsible for suppressing the rebellion to put the rebels to death, convinced that they could count on other troops remaining at their posts. Far from feeling imprisoned in a hostile environment behind their ramparts, the colonists who had not abandoned their posts were sufficiently sure of themselves to join in the power struggles then taking

[15] Narain, 1957 pp. 1–6.
[16] On this revolt, see Koshelenko, 1979 pp. 181–221.

place in Western Asia. The consideration shown to their satraps on the occasion of three successive reorganizations of the empire (at Babylon in 323 B.C., at Triparadisus in 321 and at Persepolis in 316), and which amounted, for the eastern provinces, to little more than a few staff changes indicated their considerable political importance in the balance of power. In 317 B.C., the satraps of Central Asia, Bactria, Aria-Drangiana, Arachosia, the Paropamisadae and Gandhāra joined forces to check Pithon, their powerful colleague in Media, whose ambitions threatened their own position. Their 6,500-strong army (further proof that the rebellion of 323 B.C. had not drained the country of colonists) was victorious. It was with this army that they sided with Eumenes in his struggle against Antigonus, and, in spite of the defeat suffered by the coalition in Iran (316 B.C.), Antigonus was careful not to undermine their power. These élite soldiers were also political creatures who knew how to attend to the effective running of their provinces, where they had no doubt rallied the local nobles to their cause to ensure local support. In this context, a highly significant comment is made by the Greek historian, Hieronymus of Cardia, who was personally involved. He notes that the reason behind Antigonus' decision to confirm the satraps of Carmania and Bactria in their offices was 'because they would not allow themselves to be dismissed by a mere letter, given the many partisans at their service among the local populations, whose allegiance they had won through their fine administration' (Diodorus XIX.48). The silver coins struck in the Greek manner which appeared at this time in the Oxus valley (either imitating Athenian coins or with an eagle design or bearing the name of Sophytes),[17] minted for local use, indicate that these satraps were also concerned with the economic development of their provinces. The ground had been well prepared for the fresh wave of Greek colonization, which was to be initiated by the Seleucid kings.

After a gap of some ten years, the satrapies of Central Asia reappear in the history of the Hellenistic kingdoms, through their inclusion in the empire of Seleucus I. Seleucus, a Macedonian noble, had pursued an uneventful military career among the companions of Alexander, gradually rising through the officer ranks. At the division of Triparadisus (321 B.C.) he was allotted the important satrapy of Babylonia. After many turns of fortune, in which he demonstrated his tenacity, political acumen and administrative talents, Seleucus eventually consolidated his power over the entire region of Mesopotamia and northern Syria. Before engaging in the final struggle with his rival Antigonus, who had withdrawn to Anatolia, Seleucus had to be certain of his eastern borders. In 307 B.C. he therefore decided to ensure acknowledgement of his authority in the satrapies of the Iranian plateau and Central Asia, and his expedition does not appear to have encountered any serious resistance from the Greeks living north of the Hindu Kush.

[17] Mitchiner, 1976, pp. 21–4.

Mauryas and Central Asia

South of the Hindu Kush, however, Seleucus came up against a new, non-Greek, power – the Indian Empire of the Mauryas. Its founder, Candragupta, had recently extended his power beyond the Indus, up to the eastern edge of the Iranian plateau. In spite of the vagueness of the historical texts, the treaty concluded between Candragupta and Seleucus seems to acknowledge the *fait accompli* of Indian control of a large part of the territories west of the Indus, comprising Gedrosia, the Paropamisadae (the region of Kabul and Begram) and Arachosia (the Kandahar region). The Greek colonies in these regions, particularly Alexandria ad Caucasum (Begram) and Alexandria in Arachosia and Alexandropolis (Kandahar), thus became subject to a foreign power, but this dependence did not prevent them from flourishing while remaining true to their ancestral traditions. To safeguard the interests of the Greeks and Macedonians who had come under foreign rule, Seleucus concluded a convention with the Indian rulers which guaranteed full rights to children born of intermarriages with local Iranian women. Having secured his eastern frontier by incorporating into his kingdom the provinces north of the Hindu Kush, and by stabilizing through an alliance his relations with the Mauryas, Seleucus returned west with the 500 elephants he had obtained from Candragupta. There he eliminated his rival Antigonus at the battle of Ipsus (301 B.C.) and extended his empire over a large part of Anatolia.

Political Uphavals

Slightly before 290 B.C. the provinces of Central Asia were rocked by upheavals that destroyed several cities, particularly in Margiana and Aria.[18] These were caused not by local revolts against the Greek colonists, but by a wave of nomadic invaders. This may be supposed from the military expedition led by an important servant of the Seleucid state, Demodamas of Miletus, who advanced to the Jaxartes (modern Syr Darya). On the banks of this river, beyond which lay the territory of the nomads, Demodamas erected altars honouring Apollo of Didyma, protector of the Seleucid dynasty, as a symbolic affirmation of Greek presence. Seleucus made his son Antiochus viceroy, and put him in charge of the upper satrapies. The royal coins bearing the combined names of the two sovereigns, which were struck by the mint at Bactra,[19] bear witness to a special relationship between Antiochus and the Bactrian satrapy. Antiochus probably lived in Bactria for a time, using it as a base for supervising the reconstruction of the devastated provinces. Seleucid concern for

[18] Wolski, 1947, pp. 13–70.
[19] Newell, 1978, pp. 231–6.

these provinces continued until the death of Seleucus I (281 B.C.). During his own reign (281–261 B.C.), Antiochus I was no doubt too occupied with the difficulties he faced in Anatolia and his rivalry with Ptolemaic Egypt to give them the same attention. There was ample reason for the interest shown by the Seleucids in these Central Asian satrapies. Their strategic importance lay in their role as the bulwark of the empire against the continuing threat from Asiatic nomads. Their wealth came from their oases, especially those in the valleys of the Oxus and Polytimetus (modern Amu Darya and Zerafshan), which enjoyed an agricultural surplus from the expansion of irrigated land, and prosperity from the metals and precious gems found in the mountains of the region. This interest was strengthened by family ties. Seleucus had married the Bactrian princess, Apama, whose father, Spitamenes, had organized the resistance against Alexander; Seleucus named several of the towns that he founded after her; and Antiochus was Apama's son.

Urbanization and city life

The founding or refounding of cities bearing Antiochus' name testifies to his determination to consolidate and develop the urban fabric of these satrapies. In the oasis of Merv (ancient Margiana) the Achaemenid settlement at Erk-kala, transformed by Alexander into Alexandria in Margiana, was incorporated by a new city (the Gyaur-kala site) whose massive unbaked-brick ramparts enclosed a vast square 1,500 m across, fortified at each corner by a bastion. Inside the ramparts, whose irregular contours reflect those of the site, two main streets linking the four gates crossed at the centre of the city.[20] According to Strabo, the king was so impressed by the fertility of the oasis and anxious to protect it from nomadic incursions like the one that had recently devastated it, that he ordered the city to be surrounded by a rampart 1,500 stadia (250 km) long. Lengthy sections of this defence work, consisting of a light rammed-earth wall punctuated with towers, have been discovered on the northern boundaries of the oasis.[21] At Maracanda (Samarkand), the main site of the Zerafshan oasis, a rampart with a corridor inside, following the irregular contours of the Achaemenid city and dated by pottery of the first half of the third century B.C. can be attributed to the period of Antiochus I, in spite of the differences in architectural technique.[22] The presence of a Greek colony whose origins go back to the period of Seleucid rule is confirmed by the discovery there of a Greek name (Nikias) engraved on a vase.[23] The city of Antioch in Scythia, mentioned by a Byzantine author, may be the former

[20] Filanovich, 1974, pp. 1 et seq.
[21] Viazigin, 1949, pp. 260–75; Merezhin, 1978, pp. 11–15.
[22] Shishkina, 1969, pp. 62–75, 1975, pp. 60–78.
[23] Shishkina, 1975, p. 69, Fig. 9.1.

Alexandria Eschate (modern Khojand-Leninabad) on the Jaxartes, refounded in the name of Antiochus I by Demodamas during his expedition against the nomads. Further south, in the Hari-rud valley, Antiochus restored the ramparts of Artacoana, headquarters of the satrapy of Aria (possibly Alexandria in Aria). The present-day town of Herat represents – in the quadrilateral form of its medieval ramparts, and in its four gates and two main streets intersecting at right angles near the town centre – the topography and grid pattern typical of Hellenistic cities.[24] Two other towns, also in the satrapy of Aria, owe their existence to Antiochus I: Soteira, from his surname Soter (meaning 'saviour') and Achaea, founded by Alexander and refounded by the Seleucid king. At Bactra (the capital of Bactria) the most ancient rampart of the acropolis, a solid mass equipped with projecting towers, perched on a high base of adobe, probably dates from the Greek period, though it is not possible to determine whether it was built under Seleucid rule.[25] In contrast, the remains of a lesser rampart surrounding the oasis, also constructed of adobe but flanked with rectangular towers, recalls the rampart built by Antiochus I to defend the Merv oasis, and may well have been erected on his orders.[26] The Greek city about which we are best informed, as a result of extensive French excavations, is the town located on the site of Ay Khanum, on the eastern borders of Afghan Bactria, at the confluence of the Oxus and its southern tributary, the Kokcha. It is not known whether the city was founded by Alexander or Seleucus, but we do know that its rise began under Seleucid rule. During this period the natural defences of the vast site (1,800 × 1,500 m), formed by the two rivers and a natural hill which acted as its acropolis, were completed by the construction of massive ramparts built of unbaked brick, reinforced with full rectangular towers, and by a citadel crected in the south-east corner of the acropolis. The basic layout of the town (Fig. 3) was designed so that the main street, at the foot of the acropolis, left room for the broad expanse of the lower town with its vast palace (Fig. 4). The residential area, with patrician mansions, was laid out in the triangle formed by the junction of the two rivers, while the most important sanctuary of the city was located on the side of the main street.[27]

During the first half of the third century B.C., under the reigns of Seleucus I (311–281), Antiochus I (281–261) and Antiochus II (261–246), the Greek provinces of Central Asia were part of an empire centred around the ancient Greek lands of Anatolia and Hellenized Western Asia. It was a crucial period for these colonies as their Hellenism was then nourished by frequent contact with Mediterranean influences which were able to

[24] Lezine, 1963/64, pp. 127–45.
[25] Dagens et al., 1964, pp. 61–104.
[26] Pugachenkova, 1976, pp. 137–43.
[27] Bernard et al., 1973, Annual reports in *CRAI*, 1965–80; for a general overview, see Bernard, 1981, pp. 108–20.



FIG. 3. Plan of Ay Khanum.

penetrate freely, propagated by officials, soldiers, merchants, artists and intellectuals, such as the Aristotelian philosopher Clearchus who, on his way from Greece to India to investigate Iranian and Indian religions, left behind at Ay Khanum a copy of the aphorisms embodying the most venerable Greek wisdom engraved in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi.[28]

New colonists, many of whom probably came from the Scleucid possessions of Asia Minor, strengthened the Greek presence in the Central Asian satrapies. Under Seleucid

[28] Robert, 1973, pp. 211–37.

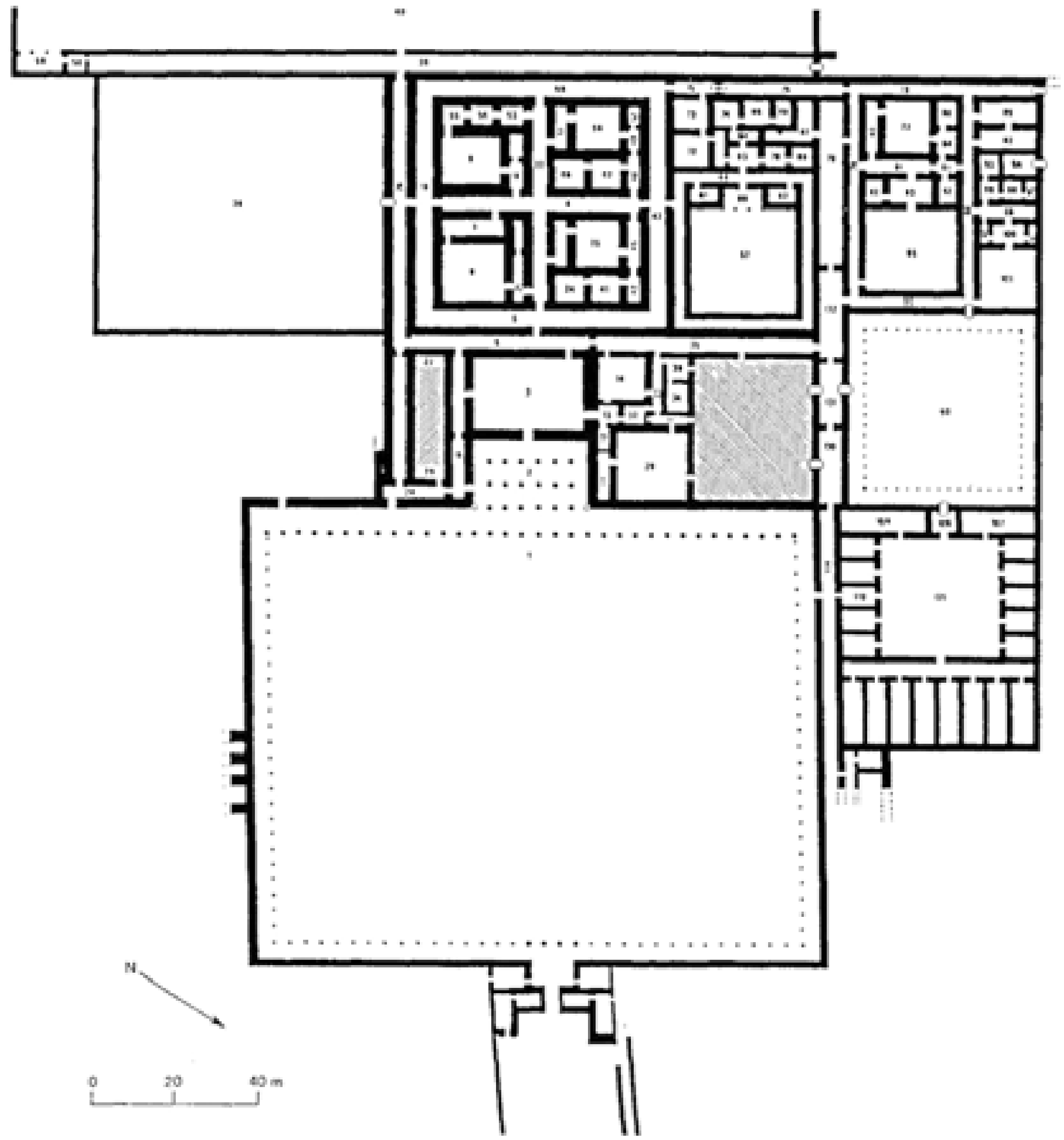


FIG. 4. Plan of the palace of Ay Khanum (reconstruction).

administration, the towns of these satrapies learnt how to conciliate the respect due to the monarchical power and the practice of municipal institutions such as they were found in any Greek city, within the limits of autonomy allowed by the royal authorities. The activity of the mints of Bactra and Ay Khanum[29] indicates the economic prosperity of the whole region. Almost 40 per cent of all bronze coins discovered at Ay Khanum were struck by the first three Seleucid kings. The West, in return, exhibited a curiosity about this new world. During their joint reigns, Seleucus and Antiochus ordered Patroclus, one

[29] Mitchiner, 1975, pp. 28–32; Bernard, 1985, pp. 6 et seq.

of their generals, to explore the Caspian, and Demodamas wrote a treatise devoted to the geographical observations he made during his time in Central Asia.

The end of seleucid power in Central Asia

Seleucid power in Central Asia fell victim to the very success of the colonies that it had so strongly fostered. Having increased the Greek elements of their population, enjoying the resources of a booming economy and benefiting from the support of local nobles and the mass of peasants under their rule, these colonies must have grown increasingly impatient with the monarchy, whose concerns were predominantly directed towards Western affairs, and eventually felt strong enough to take their destiny into their own hands. The break, which occurred gradually without provoking a reaction from the central authorities, was instigated by Diodotus, the satrap of Bactria-Sogdiana. Diodotus struck coins still bearing the name of his sovereign, Antiochus II, but he substituted his own emblem (Zeus wielding a thunderbolt) and portrait in the place of his master's. The complete break came with the king's death in 246 B.C. (or according to some sources, slightly later, in 238 under Seleucus II), when Diodotus took the final step of striking coins in his own name with the title 'king'.[30] From that time onwards, the Greek territories north of the Hindu Kush formed an independent kingdom, to which modern historians have lent the name Graeco-Bactria.

From the late third century B.C., the Greek colonists south of the Hindu Kush in Arachosia, the Paropamisadac and Gandhāra had been subjects of the Mauryan Empire and were to remain so for over a century, until around 200 B.C., when the conquests of the Graeco-Bactrians brought them back into a Greek state. In 205 B.C., Antiochus III even renewed with the Indian sovereign, Sophagasenus, the treaty concluded in 303 B.C. by his ancestor, Seleucus I, confirming Indian sovereignty over these territories. Far from being a source of hostility or conflict between the Mauryan and Seleucid empires, the presence of the Greek colonies on the western borders of India fostered neighbourly relations between the two.[31] The Seleucid kings regularly sent ambassadors to the court of Pāṭaliputra – first Megasthenes and then Daimachus. The name of a representative of Ptolemaic Egypt, Dionysius, has also come down. Emissaries sent by Aśoka to spread Buddhist doctrine in the West visited the states ruled by Antiochus II and other western kingdoms.

Even though it formed a minority among the indigenous population, whose language and culture were Iranian, the Greek element, concentrated in the towns and administrative centres, probably continued under Mauryan rule to play the leading role it had enjoyed during the last quarter of the fourth century B.C. in the early days of colonization. The

[30] Newell, 1978, pp. 245–9.
[31] Schwarz, 1970, pp. 267–316.

vigour with which the traditions of Hellenism were maintained in these regions is a cultural phenomenon with its roots deeply embedded in politics. When Emperor Aśoka ordered his edicts to be engraved in a Greek translation at Kandahar, he gave clear evidence of the importance of the Greek colonists whom he addressed in their own language. The discoveries made over the last twenty years on the site of the old town at Kandahar provide striking examples of the firmly rooted Greek culture in this Indo-Iranian setting. In contrast to the new cities that were built on virgin ground, the Greek settlement at Kandahar is interwoven with the remains of the Achaemenid town.[32]

The texts discovered there are just as eloquent as those found at Ay Khanum. A votive inscription offered by the son of Aristonax[33] provides evidence that people still knew how to write Greek verse there during the early third century B.C. Two other Greek inscriptions (one accompanied by a version in Aramaic, the language of the Achaemenid administration) paraphrase some of the fourteen rock edicts written in the Indian language and engraved on rock at different Indian sites, in which the Mauryan emperor Aśoka (268–237 B.C.) directed his subjects to observe the law of the *Dharma* and to practise the virtues it sought to inspire – non-violence, compassion, tolerance and the service of others. The intimate knowledge of the current language of Greek philosophy shown by the Greeks – for good translations can only be made into one's mother tongue – in their search for the closest equivalents to Indian concepts is a clear indication that the Hellenism of this Greek colony was nourished by the loftiest and liveliest Western thought. It was through these Greek colonies under Mauryan rule that the Indian and Mediterranean worlds entered into contact, and that a mutual curiosity arose between them. The story of Emperor Bindusāra's request to his colleague Antiochus I for a philosopher, some wine and some figs is well known, as is the Greek's mocking reply (Atheneus XIV.652–3). A Greek romance of the Hellenistic period also tells the story of a 'Philhellenic' Mauryan emperor who rescues a shipwrecked Greek on the coast of Bengal and has him escorted through his territories as far as the Persian border (Diodorus II.55–60). Megasthenes, Seleucus I's ambassador to the court of Pāṭaliputra, collected material for his book, which became the indispensable work of reference on India for the entire ancient world. Modern scholarship has reaffirmed the reliability of many of his observations on the geography, ethnography and society of the subcontinent.[34] Thus the century-long annexation of the territories south of the Hindu Kush by the Mauryan Empire created no obstacles to the implantation of Hellenism in these regions.

32 Reports on excavations in *Afghan Studies* 1978, 1979, 1982.
33 Fraser, 1979, pp. 9–21.
34 Bongard-Levin, 1971, pp. 109–22; Derrett, 1979.

4

THE GREEK KINGDOMS OF CENTRAL ASIA*

P. Bernard

Contents

* See Map 3.

Political history

Written sources for the history of Greek rule in Central Asia are scarce and fragmentary. The works of classical antiquity that dealt with the subject have been lost; all that remain are some fragments: Polybius' account of the expedition of Antiochus III which survives in mutilated form, X.27–31, 49 and XI.39, some indirect references (the *History of Parthia* by Apollodorus of Artemita, on which Strabo drew for his *Geography*) and a synopsis (Justin's synopsis of the *Historiae Philippicae*, Book XLI, by Pompeius Trogus). Bactria does not appear in the Chinese chronicles, the *Shih-chi* the *Han-shu* and the *Hou Han-shu*, until after the collapse of Greek rule in the Oxus valley. The Indian texts that refer to the *Yavana* (i.e. Greeks or westerners) are not truly historical in nature, and cannot easily be interpreted. The archaeological record also has gaps. Excavations were not undertaken in this field until relatively recently and, except for Begram and Taxila, date from after the Second World War. Very few have deliberately focused on this historical period (Ay Khanum, Charsadda and Shaikhan Dheri).[1] Although the data they have provided are neither as abundant nor varied as we would wish, these excavations have nevertheless enabled us to form an idea of the civilization created by the Greeks of Central Asia. Our knowledge of the political history of the states they founded continues to be based almost entirely on the study of the coins they issued. From these, numismatists and historians have been able to reconstruct – not without uncertainties – the sequence of various reigns and their approximate duration, as well as the location and boundaries of different kingdoms.

As we have already noted in Chapter 3 it was towards the middle of the third century B.C., with the death of Antiochus II (246 B.C.), that the final break came between the Seleucid Empire and its Central Asian possessions. The satrap of Bactria, Diodotus, took the initiative in transforming these territories into an independent kingdom. Bactria was its vital centre, around which gravitated Sogdiana in the north, Margiana in the north-west and Aria in the west. In the east, the Greek presence reached its farthest limit on the Syr Darya, where the site of Alexandria Eschate (subsequently refounded as Antioch of Scythia) has been identified beneath the medieval layers of the Khojand citadel. It is doubtful whether the Greek armies ever entered the Tarim basin; the 'Seres' and 'Phryni' referred to in a passage of Apollodorus of Artemita (Strabo XI.11.1) must be regarded as 'neighbours' of the Greeks in the broad sense of the word, because they lived outside their sphere of influence. For half a century, under the first three Graeco-Bactrian kings, Diodotus I, his son Diodotus

[1] For such reconstructions of the history of the Greek kingdoms of Central Asia, the basic works that cover the whole period are Tarn (1951), Narain (1957) and now Bopearachchi (1991). The contributions of Rapson (1922) and, above all, Macdonald (1922) should not be overlooked either.

II, and Euthydemus I, the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom was confined to the north of the Hindu Kush. During this period, however, the kingdom consolidated its position and gained power as a result of the wealth of its land, particularly in Bactria. According to Apollodorus of Artemita (Strabo XI.11.1), the fertility of Bactria's soil created for the Graeco-Bactrians the power that led them to undertake the conquest of India. Recent studies on the development of irrigation during the period of Greek rule confirm that agricultural production was the basic factor in its economic expansion.[2] The country's prosperity under Euthydemus I is directly reflected in the abundance of his coins. His issues of silver and bronze coins were by far the commonest found at Ay Khanum, after those of the Seleucid period.[3] It was no doubt this economic affluence, with a wise administration, that ensured the allegiance of the Greek colonists and local nobles. Without this, Euthydemus would not have been able to hold out for two years against the Seleucid king, Antiochus III, when he launched his campaign to reconquer the lost eastern provinces, defeated Euthydemus' cavalry on the banks of the Arius (Hari-rud) and besieged him at Bactra. Euthydemus' stubborn resistance, and the threat posed by nomads seeking to turn the conflict to their own advantage, forced Antiochus III to abandon the siege and to acknowledge Euthydemus' independence. After this abortive attempt to win back the Greek provinces, Central Asia disappeared for ever from the political horizon of the Seleucid kings. Antiochus III took the southern route back to the west, stopping on the way to renew the treaty of friendship concluded a century earlier by his ancestor Seleucus I with Candragupta, which recognized Mauryan sovereignty over the lands lying between the Indus and Helmand rivers.

It was during the period just mentioned that there took place the first of a long series of power struggles between ambitious rivals which were to punctuate the history of the Greeks of Central Asia and which, by dividing their forces, contributed to their downfall. It was by assassinating the legitimate sovereign, Diodotus II, son of the founder of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, that Euthydemus had ascended the throne.

Under Euthydemus I's son, Demetrius I, a movement of expansion began towards the territories south of the Hindu Kush and ancient north-west India. The founding of a Demetrias in Arachosia indicates that this highly Hellenized province (see Chapter 3), and probably Drangiana as well, had by that time become part of the Graeco-Bactrian Empire. The kings who followed pushed the conquest towards India; but the history of its various stages has given rise to many different theories. The most famous of these kings was Eucratides (*c*. 171–145 B.C.), whose brilliant career as a military leader led him to be compared to Mithradates the Great, his contemporary. After a fierce power struggle, he wrested power

[2] Gentelle, 1978; Gardin and Lyonnet, 1978/79.
[3] Petitot-Biehler, 1975; Holt, 1981; Bernard, 1985.

from Demetrius and went campaigning in India. The exceptional personality of Eucratides is suggested by the originality of his coinage, which is full of iconographic innovations, by the creation of his own specific era revealed by an inscription at Ay Khanum[4] and by his grandiose schemes to embellish the palace there. His outstanding career met with a tragic end. He was assassinated by his own son who desecrated his father's body.

The Indian campaigns

It was during the reign of Menander (150–135 B.C.), one of the few Indo-Greek sovereigns to be remembered in the classical tradition, that Greek rule spread to its farthest limit and included the greater part of the Panjab as far as the banks of the Ravi. If the Indian texts are to be believed, the Greek armies penetrated deep into the Ganges valley as far as Madhyadeśa and Magadha. The grammarian Patañjali, when illustrating a particular rule, used two phrases that referred to the towns of Śaketa and Madhyamika being besieged by the *Yavana* (i.e. the Greeks). Kālidāsa's drama *Mālavikāgnimitra* preserved the memory of a victory won during the reign of Puṣyamitra (184–148 B.C.), founder of the Śunga dynasty, by the Indian armies over the Greeks on the banks of the Sindhu (probably a tributary of the Chambal before the latter flows into the Jamuna). Lastly there is the *Yuga Purāna* of the *Gargīsaṃhitā*, which relates that the Greeks raided and destroyed Pāṭaliputra, the capital of Magadha. Claims have recently been made that traces of this expedition, led by Menander, are to be found in the destruction levels at various sites in the Ganges valley from Hastinapura to Pāṭaliputra itself.[5] It is unlikely, however, that the Greeks made any permanent settlements in the Ganges valley. The various hoards of Greek coins that have been found there are probably no more than an indication of the fact that Greek money was highly prized in the regions that traded with the Greek-ruled Panjab. It is difficult to know whether the Greeks exercised any direct control over Sind towards the south and the coastline between the Indus delta and the Gulf of Cambay (see Strabo XI.1.1). In all likelihood, it was not until the discovery of the monsoon at the end of the second century B.C. and the institution of fully fledged international maritime trade between Egypt and India[6] that these regions began to be of interest to the Greeks, who until then had probably been content with nominal rule over them. According to *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*[7] drachms of Menander and Apollodotus were still in circulation at the close of the

[4] Bernard, 1980, pp.22–7.
[5] Sharma, 1980. The chronology of the destruction levels on different sites that the author associated with Menander's campaigns are insufficiently substantiated to authorize such conclusions.
[6] The basic study is by Dihle, 1978.
[7] For arguments against later dates for *The periplus of the Erythraean sea* see Dihle, 1965.

first century A.D. in the Broach-Barygaza region. The presence of these coins there may be explained by the local needs of trade with the West which was developing at that time.

The last phase

Excessive territorial expansion, which spread the Greek population too thinly for adequate control, forced the Indo-Greek sovereigns to delegate too much authority to viceroys, who were tempted to play their own games. This inevitably led to the disintegration of the Greek power in India into a number of independent principalities. This explains why during the two and a half centuries between Diodotus I and the last Indo-Greek king Strato II (A.D. 10) the names of more than thirty kings have been recorded. Some of them bore the same name (much to the consternation of numismatists). Apart from those already cited, the most notable kings were: Apollodotus II (as opposed to Apollodotus I), whose coins were still in circulation in the first century A.D. in the coastal region of Broach-Barygaza; Antialcidas, whose name appears on an Indian monument – the votive column at Besnagar – set up by one of his ambassadors to the court of a Śunga king; and Strato I, whose reign lasted for several decades at the end of the second century B.C. Most of these kings reigned exclusively south of the Hindu Kush, for the territories north of the mountains had slipped out of Greek hands by the third quarter of the second century B.C.

The northern border of the empire had been weakened by the expansion into India, the multiplication of centres of power, and the struggles between rival factions. It was the first to receive the shock waves of nomadic peoples migrating from the north-western regions of China, one following on the heels of another. The abandonment of Ay Khanum around 145 B.C., a date that apparently coincides with the death of Eucratides, was most likely caused by the arrival of one of the tribes, called the Yüeh-chih, in eastern Bactria. Heliocles, Eucratides' successor, was apparently the last Greek king to reign in Bactria (*c*. 145–130 B.C.).[8] By then Bactria had also lost the two provinces on its western flank, which had been invaded by the Parthians. When the Chinese ambassador, Chang Ch'ien, visited the Oxus valley in 129–128 B.C., he found the Yüeh-chih settled on the northern bank of the river, and in control of the southern bank, though they had not yet occupied it. Chang Ch'ien's description of southern Bactria as 'a region bereft of central power, with numerous local chieftains and little armies of poor military value' seems to apply to a country in which the political structures created by Greek colonization had already disappeared. The Yüch-chih occupation of the southern bank was completed around 100 B.C., as related by the Chinese

[8] On the question of Greek enclaves, thought to have existed in Bactria later than the reign of Heliocles, see below.

chronicles, the *Han-shu* and the *Hou Han-shu*. West of Bactra, the former Greek territories were seized by another nomadic tribe, possibly the Sacaraucae. The Greek principalities south of the Hindu Kush enjoyed 100 years' respite before they too gave way to the new influx of nomadic tribes. Having been expelled from the high valley of Ili, the Sakas crossed Chinese Turkestan and the Pamirs and descended through the Gilgit and Swat valleys into Gandhāra where, around 85 B.C., under the leadership of a chieftain named Maues, they occupied Taxila. The remaining Greek possessions in Gandhāra were divided into two parts, which eventually disappeared. In the principality of Kāpiśa-Begram, the last Greek ruler was Hermaeus, who succumbed around 70 B.C. to the attacks of other nomadic tribes who had taken the western route around Bactria and conquered, successively, Sistan and Arachosia. Further to the east, between the Chenab and Sutlej rivers, the Greek power survived, with Strato II, until A.D. 5–10.

Graeco-Bactrian sites

There is no shortage of sites where finds of coins, pottery or other artefacts indicate the presence of settlements dating from the Hellenistic period: at Gyaur-kala (Alexandria in Margiana);[9] at Afrasiab (Maracanda in Sogdiana);[10] at Khojand (Antioch in Scythia);[11] in Bactria at Termez;[12] at Kobadian;[13] at Takht-i Sangin;[14] at Tepe-i Dinistan;[15] at Emshi-tepe;[16] at Tepe Nimlik;[17] at Dilberjin;[18] and at Bactra itself.[19]

Again to the south of the Hindu Kush range: at Begram,[20] at Kandahar[21] and at Taxila (Sirkap).[22] There are also sites where a town plan is still visible at ground level, which shows the characteristics of this period: at Herat,[23] Taxila (Sirkap),[24], Charsadda and Shaikhan Dheri.[25] There is even a place where an survived through the centuries as a

9 Filanovich, 1974.
10 Filanovich, 1973; Shishkina, 1969, 1975, 1985.
11 Negmotov and Belyaeva, 1977, p. 569; Belyaeva, 1979, 1980.
12 Kozlovskiy and Nekrasova, 1976.
13 D'yakonov, 1953.
14 Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1979, pp. 89–109, 1981*a*, 1981*b*; Pichikyan, 1980.
15 Denisov, 1975.
16 Kruglikova and Sarianidi, 1971, pp. 163–7.
17 Schlumberger, 1947, pp. 241–3.
18 Kruglikova, 1974, 1976, 1979; Kruglikova and Pugachenkova, 1977.
19 Dagens et al., 1964; Gardin, 1957.
20 Ghirshman, 1946.
21 *AS*, 1978, pp. 9–66, 1979, pp. 1–8.
22 Marshall, 1951; Ghosh, 1947/48.
23 Lezine, 1963/64.
24 Marshall, 1951; Ghosh, 1947/48.
25 Wheeler, 1962; Dani, 1965/66.

testimony of a Greek presence down to the Timurid period: a crossing on the Oxus was called ' Pardagwi' from its Greek name *pandocheion* (hostelry).[26] However, the thickness and number of layers dating from later periods present an obstacle to the extensive excavation of deep layers, so that in most cases the vestiges of the Greek period in Central Asia consist of just a few sections of walls. Ay Khanum in northern Afghanistan represents a fortunate exception.[27] The remains of a Greek town are still visible there at ground level, as the site was never reoccupied after it had been abandoned by the Greeks.[28] It has therefore become the site of extensive excavations, which for the first time provided an overall view of an urban layout of this period.

The Greek settlements

The presence of colonists of Greek extraction is clearly established at Ay Khanum by some fifteen proper names.[29] Some like Hermaeus, Hippias, Callisthenes, Cosmas, Niceratus, Philoxenus, Philiscus, Sosipatrus, Strato, Theophrastes, Timodemus, Zeno and Isidora are common to the entire Greek world. Among these families, many must have come from Greek Asia Minor and particularly from the Meander valley, like King Euthydemus, who had migrated from the town of Magnesia ad Meandrum. The Meander valley connection is further suggested by a statuette discovered at Takht-i Sangin which represents the River Oxus as Marsyas playing the double flute, the iconographic form in which Greek art depicted the Meander's main source. Northern Greece was the other main source for Greek colonists as indicated by a group of names characteristic of that region (Kineas, Molossus, Triballus) and Macedonia in particular (Lysanias). Most of the persons whose names have come down to us were palace officials. But as in the rest of Hellenized Asia, many of the colonists would have been landowners who lived off the tracts of land (*kleroi*) allotted to them when they first settled there. At Kandahar, the name has been preserved of a certain Aristonax,[30] who belonged to one of the Greek families of Alexandria in Arachosia to whom the imperial edicts of the Indian king Aśoka were addressed.

[26] Minorsky, 1967. E. V. Rtveladze (1977, pp. 182–8) has identified the site with Surob-kurgan-Kampyr-tepe, some 30Km west of Termez.

[27] Bernard et al., 1973; annual reports in *CRAI*, 1965–72, 1974–76, 1978, 1980; Bernard et al., 1976, 1980. Complete bibliography up to 1981 in *BCH*, No. 1, 1982, p. 23.

[28] Immediately after the Greek rule the site of Ay Khanum was briefly reoccupied by local populations but this reoccupation did not result in substantial modification of the Greek buildings, except for the partial destruction of the palace.

[29] Rapin, 1983, pp. 315–72; Grenet, 1983, pp. 373–81.

[30] Fraser, 1979, p. 10.

It is known from the classical authors that Greek colonists were not the only inhabitants of the cities of that time, either new or ancient, but that in some towns at least they lived alongside the indigenous population. This was particularly true of Alexandria ad Caucasum (Arrian IV.22.5; Diodorus XVII.83.2) and Alexandria Eschate (Arrian IV.4.1; Quintus Curtius VII.6.27). This information was confirmed by the excavations at Ay Khanum, where the names from inscriptions and graffiti also reveal the presence of Bactrians bearing Iranian names (Oumanes, Xatranos, Arixares) who must have lived within the city itself. Some of them were even officials at the palace treasury (Oxybazos, Oxeboakes, Aryandes), a further indication that the Greek colonists had managed to achieve a certain symbiosis with the local population. There is, however, no doubt that the government of the cities lay in the hands of the Greek communities. It is significant in this respect that at Ay Khanum, officials of local extraction do not appear to have occupied the highest posts in the hierarchy. The great bulk of Greek colonists arrived during the Seleucid rule, as must also have been the case for the Near East generally,[31] and the deeper Hellenization of the Oxus valley occurred with this second wave of settlers.

Greek and the local language: epigraphic documents

The colonists had preserved intact the vehicle for their cultural identity, namely their ancestral language and script. The evidence yielded by the Ay Khanum excavations ranges from simple names inscribed on vases to elaborate inscriptions cut in stone. There are now four examples of the latter at Ay Khanum, not to mention two papyri and some thirty brief financial records inscribed on vases. Two further inscriptions arc known from other sites in Bactria (Takht-i Sangin and Jiga-tepe) and three others in Arachosia.

After extensive excavations, carried out in different areas of the site, it is indeed surprising that, except for the economic graffiti, so few inscriptions have been found at Ay Khanum compared with the wealth of texts one would expect to find on the site of a Hellenistic city in the Mediterranean area. While this may possibly be explained by the element of chance encountered in all excavations or by the pillage of the ruins, the real reason can more likely be traced back to the nature of the town itself. Ay Khanum was essentially a royal city whose administration, centred around a palace, was probably not very conducive to the type of honorific epigraphy that flourished in the relatively autonomous cities of the Mediterranean kingdoms and normally furnished the bulk of inscriptions. The inscriptions that have come down to us arc nevertheless sufficient to show that the Greek language

[31] An example under Antiochus I is the founding of Antioch in Persia by colonists from Magnesia ad Meandrum, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* (1903–05), 233, 1. 15.21.

used by the colonists of Central Asia does not contain the slightest hint of barbarization. This is seen as well in the simple stereotyped administrative formulae,[32] dedications,[33] funeral epitaphs,[34] some versified according to the rules of Greek traditional prosody, or even philosophical texts such as the Aśokan rock edicts discovered at Kandahar. Here the translator demonstrates an intimate knowledge of the Greek philosophical language into which, thanks to a keen sense of proper equivalent, he was able to transpose into Greek the concepts of Indian Buddhism. The lettering itself follows the same evolution as that of characters in current use in the Mediterranean area. This applies to both the cursive capital used for economic inscriptions on vases in the palace treasury at Ay Khanum and to the various types of lettering cut in stone. In some cases these remain close to the cursive capital lettering but in others are more ornate. The language of the colonists was by no means a withered bough but rather a flourishing branch constantly irrigated by the sap of close contacts with the mother tongue. These contacts were fostered not only by the political ties that existed while the provinces of Central Asia still belonged to the Seleucid Empire, but also by the constant circulation of men of all professions, and by the penetration of ideas and literary texts. These included a philosophical treatise of the third century B.C. and the fragment of a poem, one written on a papyrus, the other on a parchment, which had disintegrated but had left the letters in ink printed in the soil in the debris of the palace at Ay Khanum.[35] Even when around 250 B.C. the Parthian Empire grew up between the Greek cities of Central Asia and those of the Mediterranean, the circulation of people and ideas was probably not completely interrupted. The Parthian sovereigns were well disposed towards the Greek communities in their own territory, as is demonstrated by the title 'Philhellenic' which figures on the coins struck by Mithradates I (171–138 B.C.) and his successors. Moreover, the military expedition of Antiochus III in the late third century B.C. provided an opportunity for Graeco-Bactrian Hellenism to reinforce direct contact with the source of its national traditions. Antiochus III was obliged to stay in Bactria for two years with his army and, very probably, with all the artists and men of letters who used to make up the retinue of a Hellenistic king.

[32] Vase inscriptions recording sums of money received and the storage of various goods at the treasury of Ay Khanum (Rapin, 1983, 1992; Grenet, 1983).

[33] The votive inscription to Hermes and Heracles at the gymnasium of Ay Khanum (Robert, 1973, pp. 207–11); the votive inscription of Clearchus on the same site (see note 36 below); also the dedication to the god Oxus at Takht-i Sangin (Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981*a*,, pp. 202–4); and the dedication at Kandahar (Fraser, 1979, pp. 9–21).

[34] Examples of funerary epitaphs are two unpublished inscriptions at Ay Khanum, one in verse, and a funerary epigram at Jiga-tepe. (On the latter, see Pugachenkova, 1979, pp. 74–5; Kruglikova, 1977, p. 245, Fig. 16.)

[35] *CRAI*, 1978, pp. 456–8; Rapin, 1992, pp. 115–23.

Apart from the two inscriptions at Kandahar, in which Aśoka addressed his Greek subjects in their own language, the most revealing text concerning the Hellenism of the Greek colonists is undoubtedly the inscription discovered at Ay Khanum in the heart of the city inside a funerary monument.[36] The philosopher Clearchus of Soli, a well-known figure in the history of the Aristotelian school, on a visit from Greece around 275 B.C., had set up in this monument a copy of the famous Delphic maxims to serve as a code of good conduct. The maxims were a collection of some 150 aphorisms kept on display at the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi embodying the ideals of Greek life. The stone stele on which they had been inscribed at Ay Khanum has disappeared, but the base on which it stood has survived. It preserves not only Clearchus' own dedication, but the final maxims of the series, inscribed on the base for lack of room on the stele itself. These read as follows: 'In childhood, learn good manners; in youth, control thy passions; in middle age, practise justice; in old age, be of good counsel; in death, have no regrets.' The fact that the municipal authorities allowed this moral and civil code – the quintessence, as it were, of Greek wisdom – to be displayed publicly in the centre of town provides a striking example of the determination of the Greek colonists to place their city under the protection of the traditional patron deity of the Greek colonization and to remain faithful national heritage.

The site at Ay Khanum has also yielded two non-Greek epigraphic documents. The first is an ostracon written in Aramaic script noting various payments. The rudimentary form of the text, devoid of inflections and syntactic markings, makes it difficult to decide whether the language is Aramaic, that is, a continuation of the official language of the Achaemenid government, or some local Iranian dialect. Even more enigmatic is the inscription engraved on a silver ingot discovered in an archaeological context dating from a brief post-Greek reoccupation of the site.[37] Both its language and its script, which suggests Runic letters, are unknown. This tantalizing text might possibly represent the language of the nomadic invaders.

Towns and urbanization

Under Greek rule Central Asia experienced such unprecedented urban growth that its fame as 'the land of a thousand cities' spread to the West (Strabo XV.1.3; Justin XLI.1 and 4). The cities were necessary instruments in the process of colonization, fulfilling many different roles. They served as: military bases; administrative centres (multiplied by dismembering the Achaemenid satrapies); economic centres of the various regional units;

[36] Robert, 1973, pp. 211–37.
[37] Bernard et al, 1980, pp. 27–9; Rapin, 1992, pp. 139–42.

communication centres and trading posts along the international and local trading routes; and, not least, cultural centres diffusing Greek traditions. Some of the new towns were built entirely from scratch on virgin soil such as Ay Khanum[38] and Alexandria ad Caucasum, [39] often in the vicinity of a previous local settlement which could be abandoned once the new town was settled. The Indo-Greek city of Taxila (Sirkap) replaced the Bhir Mound, which dated from the Achaemenid and Mauryan period, [40] and Puṣkalāvatī-Peucelaotis was moved under Mcnandcr from Bala Hissar (Charsadda) to Shaikhan Dheri.[41] Other new towns were built around a pre-existing fortified site (Antioch in Margiana around Erk-kala, [42]and Bactra around a previous citadel[43]). Others were built on the site of the former town itself withGreek ramparts superimposed on those dating from earlier periods such as Alexandria in Arachosia (Kandahar)[44] and Maracanda (Afrasiab).[45] In the latter case of existing cities reoccupied by Greek colonists, the archaeological evidence is too scanty to give us an accurate idea of the impact of the Greek settlements, but at least we know from the excavation at Ay Khanum how an entirely new Greek city, built on virgin soil, appeared.

As in the case of Peucelaotis (Shaikhan Dheri), the founders of Ay Khanum[46] took advantage of the natural defences provided by the confluence of two rivers, the Oxus and one of its southern tributaries, the Kokcha. A natural hill, some 60 m high, closed off the third side of a vast triangular area measuring 1.8 x 1.5 km. The site, with its acropolis formed by the flat top of the hill and its lower town laid out between the hill and the two rivers, was perfectly suited to the needs of the Greek town-planners. The natural defences were strengthened by a solid rampart of unbaked brick, which ran around the entire perimeter of the town, skirting the banks of the rivers and following the outer edge of the acropolis. Special care was taken to ensure that the northern tip of the lower town was particularly well fortified, for it was there that the town lacked natural defences. At this vulnerable point, the wall was built 7 m thick with rectangular towers (19 x 11 m).[47] This type of massive rampart built solid throughout, where defensive action took place exclusively on the top of its towers and curtains, and whose effectiveness resided mainly in

38 For the town plan and architecture of Ay Khanum, see the studies cited in note 27 above.
39 Ghirshman, 1946.
40 Marshall, 1951; Ghosh, 1947/48.
41 Wheeler, 1962; Dani, 1965/66.
42 Filanovich, 1974.
43 . Dagens et al., 1964; Gardin, 1957.
44 *AS*, 1978, pp. 9–66, 1979, pp. 1–8.
45 Filanovich, 1973, pp. 85–94; Shishkina, 1969, 1975, 1985.
46 For the town plan and architecture of Ay Khanum, in addition to the studies cited in note 27 above, see also Bernard, 1976, pp. 245–75, 1981, pp. 107–20.
47 Leriche, 1986.

the height and mass of its masonry capable of withstanding the assaults of siege machinery, was characteristic of the Greek period in Central Asia.[48] The same kind of rampart is found at Gyaur-kala, Begram and also at Sirkap, where the Indo-Scythian wall probably imitates a Greek rampart not yet discovered. On the contrary the ramparts of Maracanda with their hollow curtains represent the continuation of a local tradition of fortification. Within the city walls a citadel, generally built up against the rampart, provided the town with a last refuge in case of an assault. The citadel at Ay Khanum was built in this manner in the south-east corner of the acropolis.

At Ay Khanum most of the buildings were concentrated in the lower town, which was less windswept than the acropolis and could be supplied with water by a branch of one of the canals on the plain (see Chapter 3, Fig. 3). The plan of this lower town does not conform to the traditional Hellenistic grid pattern such as may be seen, in a simplified form, at Taxila (Sirkap) and at Peucclaotis (Shaikhan Dheri), where the layout of the town is divided by parallel streets at right angles to a main thoroughfare. The particular features of the urban layout at Ay Khanum result from the character of the city itself, which was the seat of a royal palace. To make room for the palace and avoid too close a proximity with other buildings, the main street extending across the lower town was diverted along the foot of the acropolis on a raised strip of ground that separated it from the lower town. The palace (see Chapter 3, Fig. 4) was thus able to spread out across the entire width of the lower town in its southern half, so that it covered an area of 350 × 250 m. The only section where parallel streets are to be observed is in the area of residential mansions at the south-west corner of the town where the rivers meet. The overall plan of the city was therefore dictated by the special role it was meant to play.

Architecture: the palace at Ay Khanum

As the Greek architects had no prototype of their own to imitate for the design of the palace at Ay Khanum, they drew their inspiration largely from the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid models they had seen when they first entered the region with the Greek armies. Like the Achaemenid palace of Susa, the palace at Ay Khanum consists of a massive conglomeration of courtyards (see Fig. 1) and buildings for official, residential and economic use. The main courtyard, through which the palace was entered from the north, struck visitors by its imposing size (137 ×108 m) and by the rows of stone columns, crowned with Corinthian capitals, which formed the façades of its four porticos. Behind the southern portico, a vestibule with eighteen Corinthian columns three rows deep,

[48] Francfort, 1979, pp. 23–30.



FIG. 1. Courtyard in the north of the palace at Ay Khanum. Remains of the south colonnade.

reminiscent of the spirit of some Achaemenid architectural compositions, provided a monumental entrance to the palace itself. At the western end of the palace was a second courtyard less imposing and of a more private character with its four porticos lined with sixty Doric columns. Among the buildings for official use in the south-east corner, one in particular is remarkable for its size and plan. It is a huge square 50 m each side, divided by two corridors at right angles into two pairs of similar units. In each pair the eastern unit features an audience hall decorated with pilasters topped by painted capitals, while the western unit is composed of office rooms. The south-west corner of the palace is occupied by three sets of private apartments recognizable as such by the presence of forecourts, kitchens and bathrooms. West of the great northern courtyard lies the treasury, composed of a series of store-rooms grouped around a central courtyard. The purpose of the building is clear from its layout and the artefacts found there. These include storage vessels, debris of precious stones (agate, onyx, carnelian, rubies, garnets, lapis lazuli, turquoise, beryl and pearls), both worked and unworked, and inscribed vases which once contained the cash reserve of the palace. Judging by the Indian coins and remains of precious objects from India that have been found there, it is possible to suggest that the palace, in its final and most monumental stage, described above, may have belonged to King Eucratides, who is known to have made conquests in India; and Ay Khanum may well have been Eucratidia, the city that was named after him.

The originality of Graeco-Bactrian architecture

The palace at Ay Khanum typifies the character and originality of Graeco-Bactrian architecture; its walls were built of unbaked brick, sometimes on a baked-brick base. The roofs were flat and made of earth, as in all Oriental architecture, but on the main buildings one or two rows of Greek-style tiles were added to the roof as a border. The use of stone: was reserved for doorways and architectural supports. The base and drums of the column were cut on a kind of lathe which ensured rapid and standardized results. While the layout of the buildings was largely inspired by Iranian and Central Asian architecture, the decor remained faithful to Greek taste, making use of the three classical orders of column (Doric, Ionic and, particularly, Corinthian), as well as of decorative terracotta antefixes, generally with the Greek palmette to line the edge of the roofs. The buildings exhibit a sense of the grandiose sometimes overdone, an effective use of repetition, a taste for symmetry that verges on the mechanical, tirelessly playing with parallel and orthogonal axes. They show a practical imagination capable of designing, the simplest and most functional solutions but lacking a sense of beauty and delicacy. All of this goes to make the architectural style of the palace typically imperial - powerful, proud and cold.

The public buildings of Ay Khanum, the gymnasium (Fig. 2) and the theatre, answered the needs of a population leading a typically Greek life. The gymnasium, which was dedicated to both the intellectual and physical aspects of Greek education, and thus constituted the most effective instrument for the diffusion of Hellenism, was composed of courtyards and buildings that stretched along 350 m of the bank of the Oxus. Its northern building, probably reserved for teaching, covered a square of 100 m by 100 m. While the basic concept of its plan adheres to a typical Greek gymnasium (a courtyard surrounded by various buildings and porticos), it is remarkable for several distinctive features: its considerable size, the dogged symmetry of its architectural composition, each side of the courtyard being occupied by a colonnaded porch flanked by two long rooms, and the apparent lack of differentiation of the rooms.

The theatre, built against the inner slope of the acropolis, spread the fan of its unbaked-brick tiers over slightly more than a semi-circle, with a radius of 42 m and a height of 17 m. Its seating capacity of about 5,000 is somewhat greater than that of the only other Hellenistic theatre so far excavated in Hellenized Asia at Babylon, and slightly smaller than the famous theatre at Epidaurus in Greece. The presence of royal boxes set half-way up the tiers, a feature unknown in Greek theatres, indicates a society in which differences in social status were more clearly marked and where the democratic ideal so cherished, even by Greek cities under royal rule, was already seriously weakened. There can be no doubt,



FIG. 2 General view of the gymnasium of Ay Khanum.

however, that the repertoire of Greek plays was performed there. Indirect but indisputable evidence of this is provided by one of the carved spouts of the Oxus fountain, which represents the traditional comic mask of the slave cook.[49] It is, therefore, quite probable that the colonists of Ay Khanum, like their Mediterranean cousins, were familiar with the Greek new comedy, and in particular with the plays of the most famous Greek comic writer, Menander. A passage in Plutarch (*De Alexandri fortuna aut virtute*, 328 D.), referring to the fact that in the parts of Asia conquered by Alexander, the children of Persia, Susa and Gedrosia were learning to recite the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, confirms, in spite of rhetorical exaggeration, the spread to Asia of that typically Greek literary genre and social phenomenon: the theatre.

Another kind of construction at Ay Khanum that is equally characteristic of the Greek urban landscape is a stone fountain, decorated with carved spouts and fed by underground streams situated at the foot of the ramparts along the bank of the Oxus.[50] Ay Khanum possessed an arsenal, set like the theatre on the edge of the main street, at the foot of the acropolis. It was a vast edifice measuring 140 × 110 m, with store-rooms grouped around a central courtyard. Its presence and size emphasize the role of Ay Khanum as a military base on the eastern marches of Bactria.

49 *CRAI*, 1976, pp. 310–13, Fig. 18.
50 Leriche and Thoraval, 1979, pp. 171–205.

At Ay Khanum, as in other Greek towns, the dead were buried outside the city walls and the families had their mausoleums made up of several vaulted chambers arranged on either side of a central passage. There massive rectangular structures of unbaked brick, half submerged in the earth, represent a kind of funerary architecture unknown in the Greek world and that appeared here for the first time in Central Asia. In accordance with Greek custom, honorary burials were allowed within the city walls. This privilege was granted to benefactors of the community so that their memory would be for ever present among the living. Two such mausoleums in the shape of small Greek temples were discovered near the entrance to the palace. The more monumental of the two contained an underground stone vault and was probably surrounded by a row of columns. The more modest, which was also the more venerable because it contained the mortal remains of Kineas, one of the city's founding fathers, had a simple façade with two wooden columns.

Domestic architecture

It was, paradoxically, in domestic and religious architecture – the two types most directly involved in the personal life of the citizens and which ought, therefore, to have been the most conservative – that we encounter the most far-reaching innovations. The traditional Greek house had a central courtyard around which the living room and service quarters were arranged. This was replaced by a house with a courtyard in front of the body of the building and with the building itself firmly centred around the main living-room. A peripheral corridor set off the living-room from the other rooms that formed a horseshoe around it. This living room opened out into the front courtyard through a two-columned porch. This layout subordinated all other rooms to the main living-room, which became the focal point of the architectural composition, while the courtyard acted as a kind of private annexe. In this plan we may have evidence of a hardening of the hierarchical relationship between the master of the house and his subordinates. Although the houses were radically different from those of the Mediterranean, they retained a typically Greek feature – the bathroom – and an even more important place was reserved for it than in their Mediterranean counterparts. Constructed with particular care, the bathroom consisted of two or, more often than not, three complementary rooms, which led in a row from one to the other. The floors were of flagstones or mosaics and the walls plastered with red stucco. There were usually a dressing room, a bathing room, where one could take a shower, and a water supply with cauldrons, from which one drew the hot and cold water. This type of domestic architecture was particular to the patrician mansions in the southern quarter of the town and its northern suburbs, and to Bactria in general. It probably incorporates elements borrowed from local

domestic architecture, and is unknown south of the Hindu Kush, where the few Indo-Greek houses uncovered at Taxila (Sirkap) reflect the principles of the traditional Greek plan with a central courtyard that is found in the Mediterranean and throughout Western Asia.

Religions and religious monuments

In the absence of texts, coins in general and the religious monuments discovered at Ay Khanum are practically the only sources known about the religion practised by the Greeks of Central Asia. With very few exceptions, the official state pantheon was entirely Greek, as illustrated by the images on the coins which depict its various gods in association with the reigning monarch.[51] Among the relatively small range of deities most frequently represented, we find Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, Heracles, the Dioscuri, Artemis and Athena (the latter portrayed mostly in her typically Macedonian form as Athena Alkidemos), as well as Nike and Tyche, personifications of victory and good fortune. Examples of cross-influences with local divinities arc rare, for example: the crown of radiating spikes that surrounds the head of Artemis, perhaps suggesting the halo of light worn by the Iranian goddess Anahita; the Persian cap worn by Zeus-Mithra, also surrounded by rays of light, on the coins of Amyntas and Hermaeus; and lastly, the wheel, the Indian symbol of universal kingship, found on one lone copper coin of Menander. The significance of the use of the bull and the elephant on the coins remains ambiguous. Both these animals arc as common to Greek symbolism (they are featured on Seleucid coins) as they are to Indian (where they are the animals sacred to Śiva and Indra). Agathocles, one of the first kings to penetrate into the Panjab, is unique in that, on the coinage minted in his Indian dominions, an important place was given to local Hindu deities: the brothers Kṛṣna (Krishna), holding a wheel, and Balarāma holding a plough, as well as an Indian goddess holding a flower.[52]

On the basis of the coinage, one would have expected to find Greek-style temples in Bactria. It therefore came as a great surprise that the architecture of the temples discovered at Ay Khanum owed nothing to Greek tradition. One of the most important, if not the principal, sanctuary of the city, both in terms of size (60 × 60 m) and location – on the main street, not far from the palace – contained a massive temple 20 m by 20 m raised up on a high, three-stepped base with its outer walls decorated with indented niches. Inside the temple, a large vestibule led into a smaller chapel flanked by two sacristies. Opposite the entrance stood the cult image. Outside the city walls, not far from the main gate, stood another temple with a closely related plan, also standing on a similar high podium, with

[51] For coin types, see Lahiri, 1965; Mitchiner, 1975.

[52] Bernard and Audouin, 1974, pp. 7–41. Pantaleon, whose coinage was similar to that of Agathocles but less rich, also issued bronze coins depicting a goddess holding a flower.

its outside walls similarly decorated with indented niches, but containing three chapels opening into an open-air vestibule. There was also another sanctuary at the south-west corner of the acropolis, built around a monumental stepped platform in the open which was clearly used as an altar. This last place of worship recalls directly Iranian religious sites, where, according to the descriptions of classical authors, the Iranians worshipped the forces of nature in high open places, without erecting any statues to personify them. Even if we were ready to admit that this sanctuary was specially built for the local population, particularly for the troops stationed on the acropolis, and that the temple outside the city walls was also erected for a local cult, this supposition would not apply to the main temple with the indented niches which was obviously used by the Greek colonists themselves. The only significant fragment of its cult image that has survived – a foot clad in a Greek sandal decorated with winged thunderbolts, carved in an impeccably Greek style – seems to indicate that the divinity in question, whose identity remains unknown, was portrayed in Greek form (perhaps a Zeus). However, the burial of votive vases at the foot of the edifice indicates a ritual unparalleled in Hellenistic religion. The painted images of the Dioscuri at the entrance to the shrine of the temple at Dilberjin in the ancient oasis of Bactra[53] confirm that divinities of Greek origin were worshipped in temples built in a purely Oriental style. It is not impossible, however, that these Greek gods may have been identified with local divinities.

Since such a combination of Greek deities with Oriental temples has been observed at only two sites, neither of which have been fully excavated, it should not be set up as a general rule. The undeniably Greek inspiration of the monumental temple of Jandial at Taxila,[54] both in terms of its plan and its décor of Ionic columns, in spite of its peculiar features and its probable post-Greek date, indicates that religious buildings in the Greek style did indeed exist in the Indo-Greek area. This possibility should not be ruled out for Bactria either, which was the true cradle of Central Asian Hellenism, and where the public mausoleums of Ay Khanum faithfully preserved the memory of this traditional religious architecture.

[53] For the oldest level, possibly dating back to the end of the Graeco-Bactrian period, see Kruglikova, 1977, pp. 407–10. For the painting of the Dioscuri, see Kruglikova, 1976, pp. 87–93; Burîy, 1976, pp. 110–13. The layout of the sanctuary of the god Oxus at Takht-i Sangin is also non-Greek. See Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981*a*, pp. 197–200 (the Kushan level); Pichikyan, 1991.

[54] Marshall, 1951, pp. 222–9.

Local cults and Buddhist influence

We have little information regarding the indigenous cults during this period, at least as far as the lands north of the Hindu Kush are concerned. The Oxus river, master of fertilizing waters, certainly occupied an important place in local religious thought. This is suggested by the use of its name in the composition of personal names, and by the discovery of a statuette at Takht-i Sangin which represents the Oxus in the form of the satyr Marsyas playing the double flute.[55] This very unusual manner of depicting a river-god suggests a direct link with the way Greeks used to represent the source of the Meander, the great river in Anatolia. This in turn leads to speculation that the valley of the Meander may have provided Bactria with contingents of colonists during the period of Seleucid rule. At Ay Khanum two naked women figurines carved in bone with exaggeratedly feminine features, and standing in hieratic frontality, undoubtedly represent a local fertility goddess[56] rather than the purely Greek Aphrodite. At Takht-i Sangin indirect evidence for the cult of fire, which plays such an important part in Iranian religions, is found in a personal name, Atrosokes, which means 'fire-brand'.[57] The monumental altar on the acropolis at Ay Khanum is evidence of a non-Greek cult, but its precise nature remains obscure. The documents concerning Greek territories south of the Hindu Kush offer information on the relationship between the Greek colonists and Indian religions. Their impact on the new masters of the territories was felt even in the most exalted circles of society. Heliodorus of Taxila, ambassador of the Indo-Greek king Antialcidas, who served at the court of the king of the Vidiśā region, was a follower of the cult of Vishnu, as can be seen from the confession of faith that he inscribed on a votive column dedicated to Vāsudeva at the site of Besnagar.[58] Above all it was Buddhism that penetrated Greek society, and the reasons for its success can be looked for in the fact that its concepts contained many points in common with that of the philosophy of Epicurus[59] and that it had profited from the active protection of the Mauryan emperors. The conversion of Menander, the most famous of the Indo-Greek sovereigns, to the 'Good Law' as described in the Indian work entitled *Milindapañha*[60] may or may not be a historical fact, but it docs bear witness, at least, to Menander's personal sympathy for that doctrine and more generally to the strength of the message that had been passed on by the the Emperor Aśoka to the Greeks in his

[55] Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981*a*, pp. 202–4.
[56] *CRAI*, 1974, pp. 302–3; Francfort, 1984, pp. 15–17.
[57] Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981*a*, p. 202; Pichikyan, 1991, pp. 170–2.
[58] . Raychaudhuri, 1920, pp. 58–61.
[59] Schlumberger, 1972, pp. 188–99.
[60] Foucher, 1951, pp. 289–95.

north-western provinces more than 100 years earlier. Towards the end of the Greek occupation of Gandhāra or shortly thereafter, a local governor, the Meridarch Theodorus, *dedicated a Buddhist reliquary in Swat*.[61] The extraordinary flowering of what is called Graeco Buddhist art in the first centuries A.D. would probably never have occurred had there not been a large number of Buddhists already in the Greek community of the southern provinces and among its artists.

The figurative arts

In contrast to the many examples of creative originality in architecture, the figurative arts were, generally, much more dependent on Western models of a latter day classicism. The early date (towards the middle of the second century B.C.) at which the Greek Empire went into decline left little time for the figurative arts to be revitalized by the upsurge of inspiration that characterized the mainstream of Hellenistic art in the second and first centuries B.C. In many respects, it is even possible to speak of Central Asian Greek art as traditionalistic, as in the case of the mosaics discovered at Ay Khanum. Instead of being composed of small stone cubes, which could be laid down in tight patterns to create skilful effects of depth and colour, the mosaics were made by the old technique of setting pebbles in a bed of cement.[62] The loose spacing of the pebbles and the limitation of colours, white for the background and brown red with a few isolated touches of black for the designs, reduced the decorative motifs to simple outlines, while the repertoire itself remained conventional. The same conservative spirit may be seen in the stone statuary, which was mainly used in small-size works, such as a woman leaning on a short column,[63] a male nude wearing a crown of leaves,[64] which is a fine anatomical study in the best Greek tradition (Fig. 3), the bust of an old man set on top of a pillar,[65] the funerary relief of a naked youth, with his cloak thrown over his back[66] and a gargoyle representing a comic mask.[67] The general standard of craftsmanship is high. There is, however, one important innovation that we owe to the Graeco-Bactrian artists. In the execution of large-scale statues and reliefs for decorating the walls of certain buildings, these artists systematically used and perfected the technique of modelling raw clay or stucco on a framework of wood and thin lead wires used only

61 *CII*, 1929, 2, 1, 1.
62 Bernard et al., 1976, pp. 16–24.
63 *CRAI*, 1972, pp. 628–9, Fig. 15.
64 *CRAI*, 1969, pp. 341–4, Figs. 17–18.
65 Bernard, 1967, pp. 90–1, Plates XIX–XX; Veuve, 1987, pp. 91–3.
66 *CRAI*, 1972, pp. 623–5, Fig. 13. For a foot from the cult image in the temple with indented niches, see also page 115 above and *CRAI*, 1969, pp. 338–41, Figs. 15–16.
67 *CRAI*, 1976, pp. 310–13, Fig. 18; Leriche and Thoraval, 1979, pp. 196 et seq., Figs. 16–18.

to a limited extent in the Mediterranean area. With this technique the sculptors were able to develop a more personal style, particularly in the art of portraiture (heads found at Ay Khanum and Takht-i Sangin (Figs. 5 and 6)).[68] Other superb examples of this development of skilled portraiture are seen in the work of the Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek coin engravers and in the bust of a veiled woman from a terracotta mould (Fig. 4) found at Ay Khanum.

The abundance, diversity and quality of the products of the so-called minor arts arc characteristic features of Greek civilization in Central Asia. The sites of Ay Khanum and Takht-i Sangin have yielded a mass of objects of every kind – utilitarian, decorative and votive – made from a wide range of materials. The decorative bowls made of dark schist, carved with simple designs and encrusted with coloured stones, which were discovered at Ay Khanum, [69] are typical of these local crafts. Owing to the proximity of Bactria to India, the working of ivory in that province was particularly well developed and produced a wide range of fittings from furniture to arm-fittings. The Greek tradition was forcefully expressed in this field as can be seen in parts of thrones and beds, [70]sword hilts[71] and figurative carvings for sword handles and scabbard endings such as a head of Heracles wearing his lion scalp head-dress, [72]an image of the same Heracles trampling on an adversary[73]and a fantastic feminine water deity, half centaur, half triton, holding an oar. Two bronze statuettes, one of Heracles crowning himself, [74]the other of the god Oxus portrayed as Marsyas playing the double flute, [75]exemplify the reworking of Western themes in a provincial style not without a certain rustic flavour (particularly in the case of the Silenus). It was indeed in this field of the minor arts that local artists were most likely to play a role, opening the way to Oriental conceptions. For example, we have at Ay Khanum terracotta figurines of a local goddess dressed with heavy robes and weighed down with jewellery, as well as bone statuettes in which a naked and plump goddess is represented in a hieratic nudity.[76] The most important work in this Graeco-Oriental style is a gilded silver plaque, also discovered at Ay Khanum, which depicts the Greek goddess of nature, Cybele, riding over a rocky terrain in her chariot drawn by lions and driven by a winged Victory.[77] Two priests dressed in the traditional robes of the servants of Cybele take part in the scene, one walking behind

68 *CRAI*, 1969 p. 344, Figs. 19–20; Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981*a*, pp. 204–6, Figs. 9–10.
69 Francfort, 1976, pp. 91–8, 1984, pp. 21–6.
70 Bernard, 1970, pp. 327–43.
71 Pichikyan, 1980, pp. 202–12.
72 Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981*a*, pp. 212–15, Fig. 17.
73 Ibid., p. 207, Fig. 12.
74 *CRAI*, 1974 p. 302, Fig. 13.
75 Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981*a*, pp. 202–4, Figs. 6–7.
76 *CRAI*, 1974, pp. 302–5, Fig. 15; Francfort, 1984 p. 15; Guillaume and Rougeulle, 1987, pp. 60–3.
77 *CRAI*, 1970, pp. 339–47, Fig. 31; Francfort, 1984, pp. 93–104.



FIG. 3. Limestone statuette of a naked man wearing a crown of leaves, Ay Khanum.

the chariot and holding a parasol to provide shade, the other burning incense on the top of a high stepped altar of an Oriental type. The sun, the moon and a star shine in the sky. The allegorical representation of Victory, the personification of the sun as the bust of Helios and the robes worn by Cybele and the Victory are all inspired by the Greek aesthetic tradition, but the conventions of Oriental art are deeply felt in the absence of perspective, in the



FIG. 4. Bust of a veiled woman, from a terracotta mould, Ay Khanum.

flatness of composition, and in the rejection of three-quarter views in favour of absolute frontality or strict profile. This work nevertheless remains an exception, and it has to be admitted that the figurative arts lack the originality and homogeneity of style that we find in the architecture of the period, and the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra of later times.

Everyday implements

For everyday needs, the colonists relied heavily on implements created by Greek technology. Apart from the common grinders to be found in any civilization, heavy grain millstones have been discovered in the colonists' houses. These millstones, whose area of distribution coincides with that of the Greek colonization, are of a sophisticated design. The upper grinding stone, cut out to act as a hopper, was moved back and forth by means of a horizontal lever allowing the grain to flow automatically from the hopper to the lower



FIG. 5 Head of a Seleucid King : Seleucos I(?), Takht-i Sangin.Clay and alabaster.(Photo:©Vladimir Terebenin.)

stone where it was crushed. The wine presses and ink-wells[78]were copied from Western models, and Greek-style sundials with a hemispherical section were used to tell the

[78] *CRAI*, 1978, pp. 462–3, Fig. 21, Guillaume and Rougeulle, 1987, pp. 47–8.



FIG. 6. Head in clay and alabster with Bactrian-style head-dress, Takht-i Sangin.(Photo:©Vladimir Terebenin.)

time.[79] An equatorial sundial was found in the gymnasium at Ay Khanum whose form, though quite distinct from any previous known model, was nevertheless obviously inspired

[79] Veuve, 1982, pp. 23–36, 1987, pp. 86–8.

by the Greek theory of solar clocks.[80] A large part of the ceramic vessels imitated specifically local shapes (for example, the tulip bowl in the Panjab and Gandhāra area and the cylindro-conical drinking-cups in the Oxus valley), but new types inspired by Greek models were constantly introduced, such as high-footed craters, fish platters, hemispherical bowls, carinated bowls, bowls with moulded designs (the so-called Megarian bowls) or applied designs (the so-called Pergamene vessels), amphorae, pitchers, etc. Even the greyish black slip of certain series is a deliberate substitute for the black-glaze monochrome pottery of the Mediterranean area.[81]

Trade and trade routes

The distribution of silver coins is a good indication both of their use as international currency beyond the borders of the countries in which they were issued, and of the geographical range of that country's commercial activities. The area in which Graeco-Bactrian tetradrachms are found (mainly of Euthydemus I and II, Eucratides I and II, and Heliocles) reached as far as Syria-Mesopotamia with finds at Baarin,[82] Susa[83] and the Kabala hoard in Caucasia.[84] Indo-Greek coins circulated as far as the heart of the Ganges valley at Panchkora.[85] In contrast, the Western silver coins that reached Bactria were mainly Seleucid (up to Antiochus III) or posthumous issues struck in the name of Alexander from mints in Asia Minor, Syria and Phoenicia.[86] A large hoard of Indian coins, each stamped with several punch marks, and Indo-Greek drachms of Agathocles was discovered at Ay Khanum[87] but it probably tells us little about the trade between Bactria and the Greek provinces of north-west India, because the hoard was found in the palace treasury, and seems to represent taxes and duties levied in those regions. The same is no doubt true of a mother-of-pearl plaque whose decoration made of incrusted coloured glass is typically Indian in style,[88] and of fragments of agate and onyx used for furniture decoration, which were discovered in the same place, and whose Indian origin is equally indisputable. The existence of close trade links with the Indian subcontinent is clearly seen in the widespread

[80] Veuve, 1982, pp. 36–51, 1987, pp. 88–91.
[81] Gardin, 1973, pp. 121–88; Bernard et al., 1976, pp. 45–51.
[82] Seyrig, 1973. (Hoard 28, No 3.) a coin of Eucratides has even been found in a hoard discovered in Italy, and another has been found on the northern coast of the Black Sea.
[83] Mørkholm, 1965, pp. 127–56; Houghton and Le Rider, 1966, pp. 111–17; Strauss, 1971, pp. 109–40; Le Rider, 1965 p. 198.
[84] Dadasheva, 1976, pp. 106–9.
[85] Sharma, 1980, pp. 80–3.
[86] Curiel and Fussman, 1965; Petitot-Biehler, 1975, pp. 40–51; Holt, 1981, pp. 12–13.
[87] Bernard and Audouin, 1973, pp. 238–89, 1974, pp. 7–41.
[88] Bernard et al, 1980, pp. 29–36; Rapin, 1987, pp. 185–232.

use of ivory in local workshops for the production of a range of artefacts. Western imports were extremely rare, for local craftsmen were successful in responding to every kind of demand, and produced items that were thoroughly Greek in style. Among the finds from the Mediterranean area which were made at Ay Khanum we might mention scraps of literary papyri,[89] the stamped handle of an amphora, unique among hundreds and thousands of sherds,[90] some fragments of black glazed pottery and plaster casts taken from metallic vessels of probable Western origin. For obvious reasons, it is even more difficult to detect Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek exports. It is quite likely that part of the ivory destined fot the workshops of Hellenized Asia came from India and was transmitted through Bactria. The possibility that the famous carved rhytons of Nisa in Parthia were produced by Graeco-Bactrian craftsmen cannot be ruled out.[91] But the first real trade links between Central Asia and China were established much later than the mission of Chang Ch'ien and lie beyond the scope of this chapter.

In the third and second centuries B.C., the trade we have just mentioned was carried out exclusively by overland routes, for the sea route linking the north-western coast of India to the Persian Gulf and Egypt had not yet opened. The great east–west caravan route was controlled by the Greek kingdoms. Starting at Pāṭaliputra, it made its way up the Ganges valley to cross the Panjab, through Taxila and Puṣkalāvatī. Once it had reached Alexandria ad Caucasum (Begram), it crossed the Hindu Kush to descend into Bactria, and from there, it veered westward towards Hecatompylos, Ecbatana, Seleucia on the Tigris, or Antioch or even Asia Minor. At Alexandria ad Caucasum a secondary branch of this old route forked off south of the Hindu Kush to cross Arachosia and join the main route again in Aria. The *Parthian Stations*, a handbook for travellers by Isidore of Charax written around the beginning of the Christian era, describes this itinerary from the crossing of the Euphrates to Arachosia. Caravans travelling along these roads halted not only at the great urban and trading centres, like those mentioned above, but at simple staging posts, which were the forerunners of the Islamic caravanserais. One such staging post located on the right bank of the Oxus near Termez has been identified thanks to the Iranian form of its name 'Pardagwi' which has preserved the Greek word *pandocheion*, 'hostelry'.[92] The river- and sea-trade route that was said to allow the shipping of goods along the Oxus to the Black Sea, via the Caspian and the Caucasian isthmus, was never anything more than a grandiose theoretical scheme submitted to Seleucus I by one of his generals, Patroclus, and based on

[89] Ibid., p. 24, n. 35; see also above, p. 107.
[90] Bernard, 1965, pp. 636–9.
[91] Masson and Pugachenkova, 1959.
[92] Minorsky, 1967, pp. 45–53.

the mistaken idea that the Oxus flowed into the Caspian Sea.[93] All the merchandise leaving the Oxus valley and bound for Western Asia, even when it was destined to go to the Black Sea, ancient Albania or Iberia (Georgia and Azerbaijan), took the land route through Ecbatana.[94]

Coinage

Numismatics plays a crucial role in our knowledge of the Greek kingdoms of Central Asia. Indeed, it is through the study of coins that it has been possible to reconstruct the broad outlines of the history of these kingdoms, and the abundance of their coinage bears witness to the political and economic power they once held.[95] The Greek coinage of Central Asia, like that of the Seleucids from which it originated, was based on the silver standard. Gold was only struck in exceptional circumstances.[96] The coinage of this period was exclusively royal, that is to say, it was issued by sovereigns in their own name, even down to the issues of bronze coins intended for minor purchases. It may be divided into two main series that were geographically distinct. North of the Hindu Kush lay the area of what is known as Graeco-Bactrian coinage, which represents the direct continuation of the Seleucid series that it succeeded in this region and whose Attic standard it preserves (with a theoretical drachm weight of 4.4 g and tetradrachm weight of 17.5 g) as well as the exclusive use of Greek for the king's name. South of the Hindu Kush lay the area of Indo-Greek coinage, which had a weight standard considerably lighter than that of the Attic coinage (with a theoretical drachm weight of 2.4 g and tetradrachm weight of 9.8 g) and much closer to that of the Indian punch-marked coins that were common in those territories. The Indo-Greek coins bear bilingual inscriptions, one Greek and the other a translation of it into Prakrit, the Indian language of ancient north-western India, written in Kharoṣṭhī script. The most commonly used denomination in this coinage was the drachm, which was sometimes minted in the square shape of ancient Indian punch-marked coins, a form that was also used for bronze coins. The Indo-Greek coinage, which was minted in the territories of northwestern India after they had been conquered by the Graeco-Bactrian kings, did not begin until around 180 B.C., long after the first Graeco-Bactrian issues, but continued to

[93] Tarn, 1951, pp. 486–90.
[94] Manandian, 1965, pp. 47–52.
[95] For catalogues of the coins, see note 51 above. For the historical interpretation of the coinages, see the works cited in note 1.
[96] The magnificent 20-stater piece (167 g) of Eucratides I, now in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris, is the most remarkable of these rare gold coins: see Seltman, 1955, Plate LV, No. 5; Bopearachchi, 1991, p. 69, Plates 16 and 25.

circulate until the time of the last Indo-Greek king, Strato II (*c.* 55 B.C.), long after the Graeco-Bactrian issues had come to a halt.

The recent discoveries, notably in the famous Qunduz hoard of Graeco-Bactrian tetradrachms and decadrachms issued by the late Indo-Greek kings of whom only bilingual coins were previously known (Amyntas, Antialcidas, Archebius, Diomedes, Hermaeus, Lysias, Menander, Philoxenus, Theophilus), do not necessarily prove that these kings retained enclaves within a Bactria overrun by nomads.[97] They only imply that these late Graeco-Bactrian coins were struck by these sovereigns for commercial use with the northern territories, already lost to them, where the former Graeco-Bactrian issues continued to circulate, or to pay tribute to the nomadic conquerors.[98] Except in the case of Pantaleon and Agathocles, who had admitted into their coinage certain Indian divinities, the gods represented on the Indo-Greek issues remain Greek. The wheel depicted on a unique copper coin of Menander is virtually the sole concession to Indian symbolism. Despite the progress of Indianization of the colonists, official public life remained Greek until the very end. The superb royal portraits adorning these coins, whether bareheaded, helmeted or wearing the *kausia* (a Macedonian felt cap), are some of the most striking manifestations of Central Asian Hellenistic art to survive.

The Greek heritage in Central Asia

The influence of Greek tradition on the empire of the Kushans, successors to the Greeks in Central Asia, should neither be over- nor underestimated. This influence was profound, as one would expect, even though in certain fields it met with an anti-Hellenistic reaction. These former nomads, having subjected an empire of sedentary peoples, adopted some of the ways of urban life and civilization in an environment that had been shaped by two or three centuries of Greek domination. Greek ceased to be the official language, and was replaced by local Iranian and Indian languages; but to write Bactrian, which until then had been only a spoken language, the Kushans made use of the Greek alphabet with minor modifications. Gold replaced silver as the monetary standard, but the highly developed monetary system of Kushan Central Asia, based on bimetallism (gold and bronze) and using coins depicting the king on the obverse and various deities on the reverse, was a Greek invention and in no way a product of the Iranian or Indian East.

[97] Curiel and Fussman, 1965, pp. 61–4; Bopearachchi, 1991, pp. 75–6.

[98] The late date of these kings renders untenable the theory that they would have kept territories in Afghan Bactria, especially since the region of Badakhshan or eastern Bactria, in which these last outposts of the Greek presence north of the Hindu Kush are supposed to have been located, had already fallen into nomadic hands by 145 B.C., as the excavations at Ay Khanum have shown.

In religion there can be no doubt that local cults quickly gained the upper hand over the pantheon of the colonists. This change must have been made all the easier by the fact that the Greeks themselves had probably never, except in their own official state religion, put up any barriers between their own gods and those of their subjects, and so had paved the way to their progressive assimilation. The Kushan coinage is indeed dominated by an Indo-Iranian pantheon within which only a few gods arc occasionally designated by their Greek name, but most of the deities are portrayed in a style that, if not overtly Greek, is at least Hellenized. The goddesses are shown draped in a chiton and a cloak, occasionally holding a cornucopia. One of them (Riṣto) even retained the martial costume and attributes of an Athena. The gods arc generally dressed in a knee-length tunic with a short cloak thrown over the shoulder, or in a long robe with a full-length cloak. The same trend can also be detected in both the sculptures and paintings of the period. An image of Athena modelled in clay dating from the first century B.C,. was found at Khalchayan in Bactria. Several centuries later Dalverzin in north Bactria also yielded a figure of a goddess retaining the features of a helmeted Athena; and from Tepe Shotor on the Hadda plain comes a statue of a seated Vajrapāṇi, one of the Buddha's attendant deities, which faithfully reproduces a prototype of Heracles as he is represented on the coinage of the Graeco-Bactrian king Euthydemus.

It is in the architecture and figurative arts that the Greek heritage is to be most clearly seen. Certain Graeco-Bactrian building styles were incorporated into Kushan architecture. At Dalverzin in northern Bactria this was the case both for the great mansions with their front courtyards and central living-rooms, and for a mausoleum containing many vaulted chambers set on either side of a central corridor. However, it is primarily in architectural decoration that the persistence of the Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek tradition reveals itself. It is apparent in the columns set on Attic-Asiatic bases (sometimes arranged to form a true peristyle), in the pilasters used to decorate walls, in the ubiquity of the Corinthian order with its acanthus leaves, in the rows of antefixes along the roof edges and in the decorative use of relief and sculpture modelled in clay or stucco. Even the technique of cutting the bases of columns with a turning machine survived into the Kushan period.

In the figurative arts the Greek conquest brought about an equally profound change. It introduced a certain naturalism in the representation of the human body and its drapery, an attempt to produce volume and perspective, the use of three-quarter views and asymmetrical attitudes. Even when Central Asian art had largely outgrown these outside influences, their underlying presence could still be felt. For a long time, it has been thought that the art style called Graeco-Buddhist, which developed in Gandhāra and the Oxus valley in the first centuries of our era, derived its markedly Western features from influences passing

from the Roman Empire along the trade routes. The discovery over the past twenty years of a vigorous and authentically Greek civilization that had flourished under the rule of the Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kingdoms seems to indicate that the real roots of the classical influences evident in Graeco-Buddhist art are to be sought in this easternmost branch of Hellenism, while Rome's contribution was merely secondary. Since at Tepe Shotor an artist of the fourth century A.D. can portray a Vajrapāṇi so similar to the Heracles on the Graeco-Bactrian coins of Euthydemus, and since Indo-Scythian coins provide an intermediate link,[99] there is no need to look for prototypes in some distant country beyond the sea when local traditions provide them. The fabulous royal tombs discovered at Tillya-tepe in southern Bactria have brought to light another descendant of the Greek art in Central Asia, an art of the steppes enriched with Hellenistic iconography and traditions in the form of gold jewellery, richly set with semi-precious stones, particularly turquoise.

The fact that we now have proof of the existence of Greek theatres in Central Asia, where Greek plays were actually performed, should lead to a re-examination of the origins of Indian theatre, whose first creations were roughly contemporary with the end of the Greek kingdom, and of possible Greek influence on it. In the same manner, the lively interest that Greek colonists of Central Asia took in astronomy – as shown by the discovery at Ay Khanum of sundials, one of a highly sophisticated type – raises other questions of a similar nature. We are indeed entitled to ask ourselves if the Babylonian astronomical conceptions that are manifest in Indian astronomy may have reached India earlier than has been supposed, that is to say, in the Hellenistic period via the Greek kingdoms of Central Asia.

[99] Tarzi, 1976, pp. 394–7, Figs. 10–11.

5

PARTHIA*

G. A. Koshelenko and V. N. Pilipko

Contents

THE Kingdom of Parthia emerged as a result of the socio-economic crisis affecting the Seleucid state in the mid-third century B.C. [1] In the course of that crisis the governors of the extreme eastern satrapies – Diodotus In Bactria and Andragoras in Parthia – seceded from the Seleucid kingdom. While in Bactria an independent Graeco-Bactrian kingdom came into being, the situation in Parthia was much troubled by incursions of nomads belonging to the confederation of the Parni who had occupied land along the edges of the agricultural

[*] See Map 3.
[1] D'yakonov, 1961, pp. 180 et seq.

oases from the Caspian Sea to the River Tedzhen. The Parni, with Arsaces at their head, invaded Parthia. In the ensuing struggle Andragoras was killed and control of the country passed to the nomadic aristocracy of the Parni headed by Arsaces.[2] The Parni soon seized Hyrcania (a region on the southern and south-eastern Caspian seaboard), and this boosted the economic and military potential of the infant state.

Parthia and the Seleucids

The Parthian kingdom still had to survive a stubborn struggle with the Seleucids before its independence was firmly established. Between 230 and 227 B.C. the Seleucid king Seleucus II undertook a campaign to recover his eastern satrapies. The Seleucid troops were initially successful, but the Parthians, backed by the nomadic tribes (Apasiacae), finally carried the day when the revolts which had broken out in regions to the west of the Seleucid Empire prevented Seleucus from continuing the war. The next stage in the struggle with the Seleucids took place during the reign of Antiochus III. In 209 B.C. he began his famous Eastern campaign, which resulted in the defeat of Parthia and forced Artabanus (Ardavān in Middle Persian) to recognize Seleucid overlordship. But when the Romans defeated the Seleucids in the battle of Magnesia (192 B.C.) the Parthians were able to take advantage of the situation and reconquered the provinces south of the Caspian Sea. Parthia again became independent and was able to resume its expansion both eastward and westward. This was made easier by the fact that the Graeco-Bactrian and Seleucid kingdoms lacked political stability and were open to bitter internal strife. The Parthian ruler Mithradates I (171–139 B.C.) made clever use of these favourable circumstances. In the east he attacked Bactria and took from it a number of dependent regions.[3] Media was then captured – a conquest that opened the way for the Parthians to the west and south, towards Mesopotamia, Susiana and Elymais. The political chaos in these regions enabled the Parthians to invade central Mesopotamia in 141 B.C. and seize that major centre of the Hellenistic east, Seleucia on the Tigris. After this Susa also came under their suzerainty.[4] These conquests, however, presented the Parthians with a very complex problem. The new territories that came under their control contained important concentrations of Greek and Hellenized inhabitants, who were now deprived of the privileged position they had enjoyed in the Seleucid Empire. For the next two centuries the Greek cities within the Parthian state were the main opposition forces, hostile to central rule. Counting on the support of this Greek population, the Seleucid ruler Demetrius II attempted to recover Mesopotamia in 140 B.C. but was unsuccessful.

[2] Koshelenko, 1976, pp. 31–7.
[3] Koshelenko, 1972.
[4] Le Rider, 1965.

There was a further Seleucid attempt to subdue Parthia in 131/13/ B.C. The Seleucid ruler Antiochus VII Sidetes, relying on the support of the Greek cities, inflicted severe defeats on the Parthians and penetrated into the innermost regions of Parthia. But eventually the Seleucid forces were routed and Antiochus VII himself was killed in battle in 129 B.C. This was a turning point in the history of Hellenistic Central Asia. The Seleucid state ceased to exist as a world power and its kings became the petty rulers of rival warring states in northern Syria.[5]

The Parthians recovered all the lands they had earlier lost and the way westward into Syria now lay open to them. At that time, however, the situation was once more aggravated on the eastern borders of Parthia. The major movement of nomadic tribes in Central Asia which had brought about the downfall of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom (between 140 and 130 B.C.) was bound to affect Parthia as well. In 130 B.C. the Saka tribes invaded the eastern regions of Parthia and individual detachments penetrated as far as Mesopotamia. The Parthian king Phraates II lost his life in the struggle against the nomads (129 B.C.), as did his successor and uncle, Artabanus I (123 B.C.).6 Parthia also faced substantial problems in the west where Hyspaosines, King of Characene (a small region on the northern shore of the Persian Gulf), had seized most of Mesopotamia. Thus after a period of resounding success against the Seleucids, Parthia found itself on the verge of collapse.

Mithradates II and his successors

Mithradates II (123–87 B.C.) managed to stabilize this difficult situation. He was able to subjugate Characene and re-establish calm in the Greek cities. Parthia followed a more moderate policy towards the Greeks than hitherto, and they, now lacking any support from the west, became much more reconciled to Parthian rule.

The problem of the nomads on the eastern front was solved by a mixture of military means and diplomacy. They were displaced from Parthian territory proper and settled around Lake Hamun on the lands of Arachosia and Drangiana – the region later called Segistan (modern Sistan). The emerging petty states under nomadic leaders came very much within the Parthian sphere of influence, and some of them became vassal dependencies. Parthian influence in the east was considerably extended and came to include the greater part of modern western Afghanistan.[7]

From the beginning of the first century B.C. the Parthian state had achieved unprecedented strength and had become the foremost power in Western Asia. But the latter years

[5] Fisher, 1970.
Debevoise, 1938, pp. 35–8.
[7] Sarianidi and Koshelenko, 1982.

of the reign of Mithradates II were marked by further complications: the struggle for power between various representatives of the Arsacid house; the interference in Parthian affairs of the Armenian kingdom; and the relentless eastward expansion of Rome. The first century B.C. saw repeated military conflict between Rome and Parthia, as well as clashes between old rivals who were meddling in each other's internal disputes.

The pattern of decline

During this period there were two major political forces in Parthia, and the struggle between them had a profound influence on the course of Parthian history as well as on relations between Rome and Parthia.[8] One group consisted of the leaders of the Greek and local towns of Mesopotamia and the Parthian aristocracy who had settled there. The major force in the coalition was provided by the Greek towns. The eastern progress of the Romans gave the Greeks new hope. They were attracted by Rome's call to defend 'Hellenism' from 'barbarism' and the prospect of social peace secured by the Roman legions. In a region with age-old traditions of slavery, the ruling classes of both the Greek and eastern towns (which were close in character to Greek city-states) saw orthodox slave-holding as the main source of their enrichment. Constant wars, which disrupted economic activity, halted trade and led to disturbances and uncertainty, were equally unwelcome.

The second group consisted of the nobility of the purely Iranian regions, and was closely linked with the peripheral nomadic tribes. This section of the Parthian ruling class wished to pursue a broad expansionist policy, and with the ordinary fighting men dependent on them, formed the nucleus of Parthia's armed forces. They looked to enrichment from major conquests. Their popular slogans were 'the return of the Achaemenid heritage' and 'the conquest of all Asia'.

The Romans and the Parthians

The series of wars between the Romans and the Parthians took place against the background of active conflict between these two groups of the ruling class of Parthia, with the Romans actively supporting those claimants to the Arsacid throne put forward by the 'Western' group. The major wars between the Romans and the Parthians in the first century B.C. were indecisive. In 53 B.C. the Romans faced a humiliating defeat at Carrhae in Mesopotamia; the Parthian invasion of the West in 40 B. C. ended in their disastrous defeat at the battle of Gindara (38 B. C.); and a further Roman invasion under Mark

[8] Koshelenko, 1963, pp. 56–8.

Antony in 36 B.C. failed likewise. At the end of the Roman civil war in 29 B.C., when Octavian became the first Roman emperor – Augustus – Rome's Eastern policy underwent important changes. The aggression that had marked the period of the Republic gave way to a quest for peace. One of the main reasons for this was the realization that Rome lacked the military resources for any large-scale conquests in the East. Parthia thus played an outstanding role in the history of the East by halting Roman aggression. The new Roman policy of peace also coincided with the interests of Parthia, which was not strong enough to undertake major conquests in the West. However, Rome's changed policy in the East did not signify an end to attempts to interfere in the domestic affairs of Parthia. It was a period of intense conflict between the two groups of Parthia's ruling class. The Romans actively took sides in the dispute, supporting the candidate who was most favourable to their own interests in Parthia. Their success in placing Vonones on the Arsacid throne was a considerable achievement for Roman diplomacy; but the pro-Roman policy of Vonones brought about a reaction which consolidated all the 'patriotic' forces, under Artabanus II, founder of the Later Arsacid dynasty. His main support came from the eastern regions of Parthia and he had close links with neighbouring nomadic tribes. His supporters opposed the transformation of Parthia into a Roman vassal and viewed the conflict with Rome as a struggle to restore the power of Cyrus, the Achaemenid. In domestic policy Artabanus II sought to limit the self-rule of the Greek towns. In cultural matters there was a reorientation towards ancient Iranian traditions, and the Hellenistic cultural heritage was rejected.

Successors of Artabanus

Although the reign of Artabanus II was an important landmark in the history of Parthia, being marked by significant political and cultural changes in the Arsacid state, it did not mean an end to internal conflicts. For many years after the death of Artabanus, wars were waged between two of his successors, Vardanes and Gotarzes. Some stability was achieved under Vologases I, who conducted an active foreign policy and sought to restore Parthian control over Armenia. The long and variable struggle between Rome and Parthia over this ended with an agreement in A.D. 63 that the brother of the Parthian king Vologases should be proclaimed King of Armenia and crowned in Rome by the Roman emperor Nero. This agreement was extremely important since it led to a long period of peace on the frontier between Rome and Parthia interrupted by only minor disputes.

Later Roman–Parthian relations

Peace was next broken in A.D. 114 when the Roman emperor Trajan began his carefully prepared campaign against Parthia.[9] The Romans initially had considerable success, capturing Ctesiphon, the capital of Parthia. The Roman army marched to the Persian Gulf, and the Roman fleet sailed down the Tigris. The success of the Romans owed much to the bitter conflicts within Parthian society between rival claimants to the Arsacid throne, and to the revolts that had broken out in Elymais and Persia. But at the height of the Roman success the situation radically changed. In all the Parthian territories conquered by the Romans, insurrections broke out, triggered off by the introduction of the Roman system of provincial administration, which strictly controlled towns, taxes and requisitions, and by the discontent of the petty rulers who had recognized Rome's authority and had subsequently been stripped of the remnants of their independence. The rival representatives of the Arsacid house united against the invader and in A.D. 117 the Romans were compelled to abandon all their conquests in Parthia. Although the Roman frontier was peaceful again, Parthia was still not secure and faced severe complications on its northern and eastern borders. It appears that Hyrcania finally achieved independence; the separatist trends of other regions of the state became more marked; and Parthia's northern provinces suffered incursions from the Alani. The emergence and growth of the powerful Kushan Empire created a permanent danger in the East. Exhausted by internecine wars and constant difficulties with Rome, Parthia sought to reduce tension in the East to a minimum. The stumbling block in relations between Rome and Parthia, however, remained Armenia, where in the time of Vologases III there was a bitter clash in A.D. 161–63. The northern flank of the Roman defence collapsed and Parthian troops invaded Syria. Rome, alarmed that there might be a general uprising against its rule in the East, mustered its strength to stabilize the situation and then to launch a counter-offensive. The peace treaty concluded at the end of the war was harsh for the Parthians, since the whole of Mesopotamia as far as the River Khabur was ceded to Rome. Even harsher for Parthia were the consequences of the war which broke out in A.D. 195. The Parthians had supported Pescennius Niger in the Roman civil war. The Romans found that Vologases IV (A.D. 191–207), who seemed to have invaded eastern Iran, had at the same time to oppose the large-scale revolts that had broken out in Media and Persia. The Roman military expedition dealt a heavy blow to Parthia: the richest parts of the country were devastated and some 100,000 inhabitants were taken to Syria and sold into slavery. The last war between Rome and Parthia began in A.D. 216. The conflict between Vologases V and Artabanus V, the two pretenders to the Parthian throne,

[9] Lepper, 1979.

made the conditions ripe for Roman intervention. The Romans, under their emperor Caracalla, invaded Parthian territory and laid waste much of Mesopotamia and part of Media. In the summer of A.D. 217, Artabanus V, who had mustered sizeable forces, started to wage a resolute campaign against the Romans. Caracalla fell at the hands of conspirators and Macrinus became emperor. After a decisive battle at Nisibis the Romans had to sue for peace. However, this was the Parthians' last success. The ruler of Persia, Ardashir, united with a number of other local rulers to raise a revolt against the Arsacids. In 223 he defeated and killed Vologases V. A few years later Artabanus V was defeated and killed at the battle of Hormizdagan, and the entire territory of the Arsacids soon passed into the hands of the new dynasty of the Sasanians.[10]

Socio-economic systems

The Parthian period saw considerable economic development in the countries that made up the Arsacid state. Archaeological investigations on the Susa plain, in the Diyala valley, the Kopet Dag foothills and elsewhere in Parthia[11] indicate that there was a sharp increase in the number and size of settlements (Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4) and in the extent of irrigated land, compared with the preceding period. The basis of Parthia's economy was agriculture; and irrigated cultivation was broadly developed in most parts of Parthia. Cereals were grown and there were large areas of vineyards and gardens. Technical crops such as cotton and sesame were well known. At the confines of the cultivated land many nomadic tribes were engaged in cattle-raising. It seems likely that good relations were established between the inhabitants of the oases and the nomadic cattle-raisers, though a number of tribes, chiefly in mountain areas, still led a communal existence within a natural economy.

Trade and commerce

Crafts were well developed in Parthia. Some items gained international recognition, including lined fabric from Borsippa (in Babylonia), carpets from the indigenous areas of Parthia, and theiron of Margiana (particularly in the form of weapons and armour). In the Parthian period trade and monetary relations were also developed. Parthia took part in extensive international trade and had trad- ing links with the Roman Empire, mainly via Palmyra, which served as a kind of 'buffer' and acted as a commercial intermediary. Palmyrene caravans went both to the various towns of Parthiaand to the coastal towns of Syria.[12]

10 Lukonin, 1961.
11 Wenke, 1975/76.
12 Koshelenko, 1971*b*, pp. 761–5.



FIG. 1. Site of Nisa. (Phote: © Vladimir Terebenin.)



FIG. 2. Nisa. Throne-room. (Courtesy of I. Iskender-Mochiri.)

The great quantities of Parthian coins (particularly from the first century A.D.) found in Transcaucasia suggest that Parthia fairly close ties with those regions. Trade with India was conducted both by sea, via Spasinu-Charax on the Persian Gulf, and overland via southern Iran or from Merv by the southeast portion of the 'royal way' leading to India via Sistan and Kandahar. In the Indian trade there was constant competition between the



FIG. 3. Aerial view of the site of Merv. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

Parthians and the Romans, who carried goods mainly by sea via the Red Sea ports. A special role in international trade was played by the 'Silk Route', which linked the countries of the Far East and the Mediterranean through Central Asia. As Parthia controlled much of the route and was able to enjoy a monopoly of its trade, Parthian merchants made huge profits by reselling Chinese wares, mainly silk, on the markets of the Roman Empire. The Parthian administration therefore tried to prevent direct contacts between Chinese and Roman merchants. This intermediary trade enriched the Parthian merchant class, and the state obtained a substantial revenue from trading dues. Archaeological finds from Seleucia on the Tigris and written records point to the existence of taxes on trade in slaves, salt and other items.[13] Local trade also developed and local markets were established, as attested by the vast quantity of small bronze coins minted to meet the needs of those markets. The process was most in evidence in the economically more developed regions of the country (Mesopotamia, Susiana, Margiana, etc.).[14]

Parthian coinage

The Parthian monetary system[15] was based on the silver drachm (weighing about 4 g). coins were first struck in the reign of Arsaces I, the founder of the state. The main

13 McDowell, 1935*b*.
14 McDowell, 1935*a*; Le Rider, 1965.
15 Sellwood, 1980.

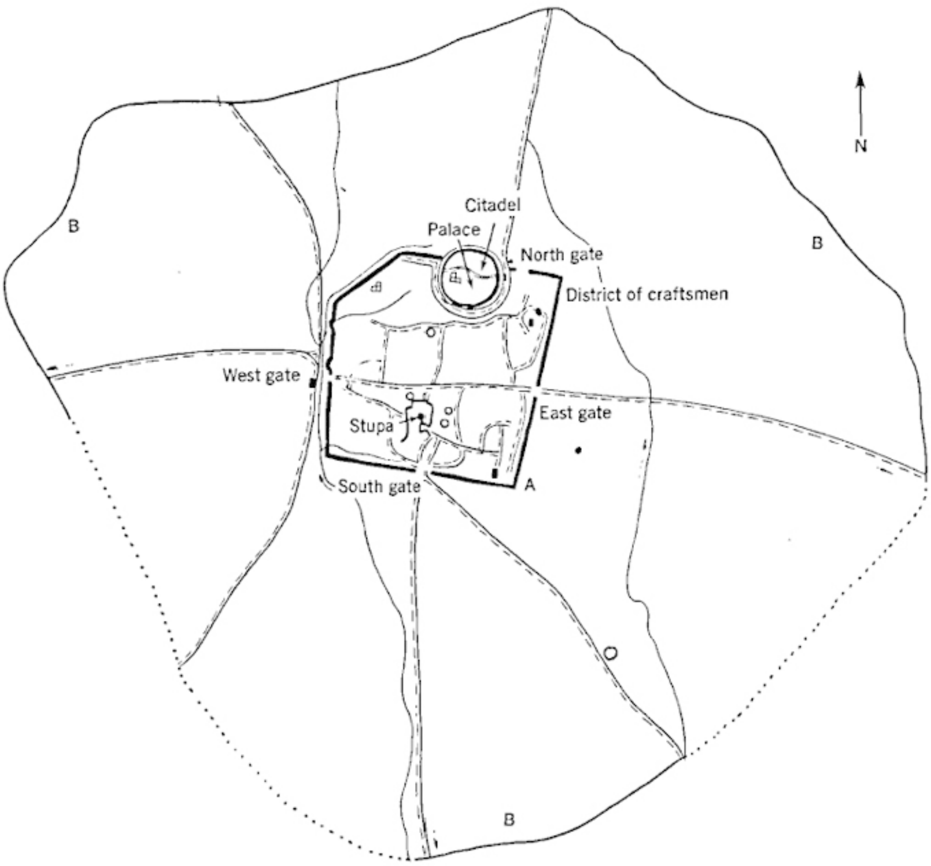


FIG. 4. Merv. Plan of the city; A – Alexandria in Margiana enclosure (Seleucid age); B – new enclosure (Parthian age). (Courtesy of V. M. Masson.)

denominations were the tetradrachm (struck in quantity by Western mints) and the drachm (typical of the Eastern mints). Small bronze coins were also issued as change. The obverse side of the drachm usually carried the bust of the king facing left, while the reverse bore Greek lettering around the edge and portrayed a seated figure in nomadic attire with a bow held at arm's length (Figs. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, as identified by D. G. Sellwood in *An Introduction to the Coinage of Parthia*, London, Spink & Son, 1971). The tetradrachms and, in particular, the bronze coins were more varied in type. From the reign of Vologases I onwards the drachm also bore Parthian letters. Starting in the seventies of the first century B.C. the reverse side of coins regularly carried monograms which, in the view of a number of researchers, are abbreviations for the names of mints. Coins struck by the Merv mint, for instance, were marked with the Greek letter 'pi'.[16]

[16] Pilipko, 1980.



FIG. 5. Drachm of Arsaces II (211–191 B.C.). (Courtesy of Christian Schaack.)



FIG. 6. Drachm of Artabanus I (127–123 B.C.). (Courtesy of M. I. Mochiri.)



FIG. 7. Drachm of Phraates IV (38–2 B.C.). (Courtesy of M. I. Mochiri.)



FIG. 8. Drachm of Phraataces and the Queen Musa (2 B.C. to A.D. 4). (Courtesy of Christian Schaack.)



FIG. 9. Drachm of Osroes I (A.D. 109–129.). (Courtesy of M. I. Mochiri.)



FIG. 10. Drachm of Vologases V (A.D. 191–208). (Courtesy of M. I. Mochiri.)

The Socio-economic fabric

The question of the character of socio-economic relations in Parthia is extremely complex and cannot yet be regarded as resolved. Parthia did not represent a uniform whole so far as the level and character of socio-economic relations were concerned. Two basic regions are to be distinguished, one being Babylonia, Mesopotamia and Elymais, the other the Iranian uplands, the eastern Iranian steppe and the southern part of present-day Turkmenistan. The differences between the two regions lay in the ethnic composition of the population (with various Iranian-speaking peoples in the east and Semitic-speaking peoples in the west) and in their very distinct socio-economic systems. In the western regions of Parthia, civilizations based on class divisions had been in existence for a long time. In the eastern regions, the switch to a class society only took place at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. In that and particularly in the Achaemenid period, slavery became a widespread practice in the eastern Iranian regions. It seems, however, that the principal influence on the social structure of the indigenous Parthian regions was exerted by the nomadic Parni.[17] Society in the eastern regions of Parthia apparently consisted of three basic social groups which can be defined as classes. The upper class was made up of the *āzāt* (free people), descendants of the nomadic aristocracy of Parni who had become the ruling class in Parthia and filled the top posts in the state administration. In the Parthian army it was they who represented its main striking power as the heavily armed and mailed cavalry. They received the lion's share of the spoils of war and thus had a special interest in an aggressive foreign policy. The second social class consisted of the descendants of rank-and-file Parni. They belonged to the conquerors and so to the ruling class, but they were dependent on the Parni aristocracy. They formed the bulk of the Parthian army, the mass of lightly armed archer horsemen. The position of the mass of the sedentary agricultural population was determined by the fact of the nomadic conquest. Its members were formed into communities, where they personally enjoyed full legal rights. They owned specific property, which they could buy and sell. But they were not considered entirely free, and there was a clear distinction between them and the upper class. They depended on the ruling class, and that dependence was collective. Ancient authors emphasized that in no case could they obtain full personal freedom. Exploitation of that social class was apparent and primarily took the form of payment of taxes. It can be presumed that the prevailing trend in social development had increased dependence of the peasant communes on the state. Another move worth recording was the attempt of the ruling class to abuse its administrative powers for personal ends. This involved exploitation of the producers. At the bottom of the social scale were the slaves, but

[17] Koshelenko, 1980, pp. 177–99.

our sources are silent about their position in economic production. In the western part of the Parthian kingdom the level of development of socio-economic relations was somewhat different, and the influence of 'classical' forms of slavery (handed down from the Seleucid period) was more in evidence. The major slave-holding centres were the Greek city-states. Manumission records found in Susa reflect the considerable extent of ancient slavery, [18] while material from Babylonia confirms transactions involving the buying and selling of slaves. Other forms of dependence continued from previous periods, including temporary debt-discharge slavery.[19] It may be supposed that in the Seleucid period it was the rule to make the surrounding rural territory dependent on the Greek city-states. This social institution was also inherited by the Parthians. On the whole, the social structure of society in the western regions of Parthia can be reckoned to have been extremely complex. In contrast to the East, the circle of fully free people was much broader, and included the citizens of the Greek towns, members of the municipal religious communities, the Parthian settlers and possibly a portion of the peasantry. At the same time, slavery was more strongly developed than in the East, and there was a much wider variety of other (non-slavery) forms of dependence.

The king and his council

The Parthian state system displayed a number of original features that were due to peculiarities of its socio-economic and political development. Most important was the fact that the system emerged from three sources: the heritage of Achaemenid Persia; the principles of Hellenistic statehood under the Seleucids; and the traditional institutions of the nomadic Parni. The king stood at the head of the state, but royal power was regarded as the collective property of the Arsacid family, and only members of the Arsacid family could occupy the throne – a principle that led to rival claimants and frequently involved dynastic conflicts. Written sources record the existence of two royal councils, which seem to have limited the king's power. One, consisting of kinsmen of the king, wielded considerable influence, particularly in matters of succession to the throne. A survival from the time of the Parni, it became an instrument by which the nobility could influence state affairs. The second council, of priests, or magi, seems to have enjoyed less influence. Alongside the Arsacid family, six other noble families played an important role in the Parthian state – an arrangement possibly due to the influence of Achaemenid tradition.

[18] Koshelenko and Novikov, 1979, pp. 41–54.
[19] Welles et al., 1959.

Administration

The Parthian administrative system was fairly complex. Part of the kingdom was divided into satrapies ruled by satraps appointed by the king. The rest consisted of vassal kingdoms.[20] The Parthian satrapy was much less extensive than the Achaemenid one. In some cases power over a number of satrapies (usually along the frontiers) was concentrated in the hands of the same person. The lowest administrative unit was the *stathmos* (in Greek) or *dīz* (in Parthian), which represented a group of a few villages. The *stathmos* also had a small military post. This administrative unit was headed by a *dīzpat*. There was an extensive and developed bureaucracy, as attested by ostraca from Nisa and by the Parthian parchments and ostraca from Dura-Europos. The towns occupied a special place in the system of state rule.[21] The Greek city-states in Parthia were a survival from the Seleucid period. Under the Parthians they formally retained their autonomy though their position changed for the worse. Their aristocracy, which had previously consisted solely of Greeks and Macedonians, lost its exclusiveness and was broadly penetrated by members of the local population. The urban system became increasingly oligarchical, popular assemblies declined in significance, and power was concentrated in the hands of a council made up of representatives of a few of the richest families. Less is known of the character and evolution of other types of town. The old Babylonian towns (e.g. Uruk Warka) enjoyed a position in Seleucid times which had made them somewhat comparable to the city-states. Their population was divided into citizens enjoying full rights and the rest, the under-privileged, without such rights. The fully privileged aristocracy formed a religious and municipal commune enjoying a measure of self-rule. These towns also owned a land district. It may be proposed that these religious and municipal communes underwent gradual changes during the Parthian period similar to those affecting the Greek city-states. While sources also speak of 'Parthian towns', in contrast to Greek ones, there is no specific information about their internal life. It can only be conjectured that they did not enjoy autonomy and were under the full control of the local Parthian administration.

Apart from the territories forming part of the royal domain and governed through satraps, much of Parthia consisted of vassal kingdoms. Their role and importance constantly increased as more and more of the states (Persia, Elymais, Margiana, Sistan, etc.) slipped from the direct control of the central government. The Arsacid family turned out to be a palliative. Separatism remained; only its colour changed. What basically fuelled separatism was the very narrow social support for the dynasty. The Arsacids were unable to create a

[20] D'yakonov, 1961.
[21] Koshelenko, 1979; Sarkisyan, 1952.

sufficiently broad unity of the ruling classes or to alter the structure estab- lished at the time of the emergence of the Parthian state, in the specific circumstances of the nomadic conquest.

The fiscal system

The fiscal system of the Parthian state is still inadequately known. What we do know is that there was a general state cadastre for the lands of the royal domain. The state fixed and strictly controlled tax revenue. Records found in excavations at Nisa provide evidence of different types of tax collection, depending on the category of the land. Two categories are known – *patbāz* and *uzbari*. *Patbāz* was collection in kind for the use of the king. It is less clear what the other category was. There are also indications of the existence of special levies for the support of religious activities, somewhat similar to tithes.[22]

Parthian culture

The study of Parthian culture still requires further research. Until comparatively recently the prevailing view among scholars was that Parthian culture was eclectic, lacking in originality and devoid of a creative basis. Parthian culture developed through the interaction of a number of factors – the Achaemenid heritage, the conceptions of the Hellenistic period, the contribution of the nomadic Parni, and the particular cultural traditions of the peoples who made up the Parthian state. The basic trend in the development of Parthian culture was the synthesis of Greek and local sources. This synthesis, which had started in the preceding period, assumed substantial proportions in Parthian times when the Greek population lost its privileged position. It took many forms and made itself felt in various spheres, notably architecture, sculpture and painting (Figs. 11, 12, 13). Parthian sculpture and painting are best known as a result of the excavations at Dura-Europos. They are marked by a particular style, which suggests that this Parthian-Mesopotamian art was one of the sources of early Christian art. Parthian architecture was marked by monumentalism and a break with the traditions of the Greek architectural orders, such styles being used for purely decorative purposes. The most widespread form of artistic craft was the fashioning of terracotta statuettes. They abound in Mesopotamia and Margiana, and provide most important material for the study of popular beliefs. Although the Arsacid dynasty was, on the whole, marked by tolerance, and various religions coexisted in Parthia, there can be no doubt that Zoroastrianism gradually grew in importance. According to tradition the *Avesta* was first

22 Koshelenko, 1966*b*, 1977; Pugaachenkova, 1967; Rostovtseff, 1938; Ghirshman, 1962, 1976.



FIG. 11. Parthian prince from the temple of Shami (second century B.C.). (Courtesy of Ahmed Tehrani-ye Moghaddam, Iran-e Bastan Museum.)

codified under Vologases I. At that time the symbols of Zoroastrianism (in the form of fire altars) first appeared on coins, possibly indicating its adoption as the official religion.

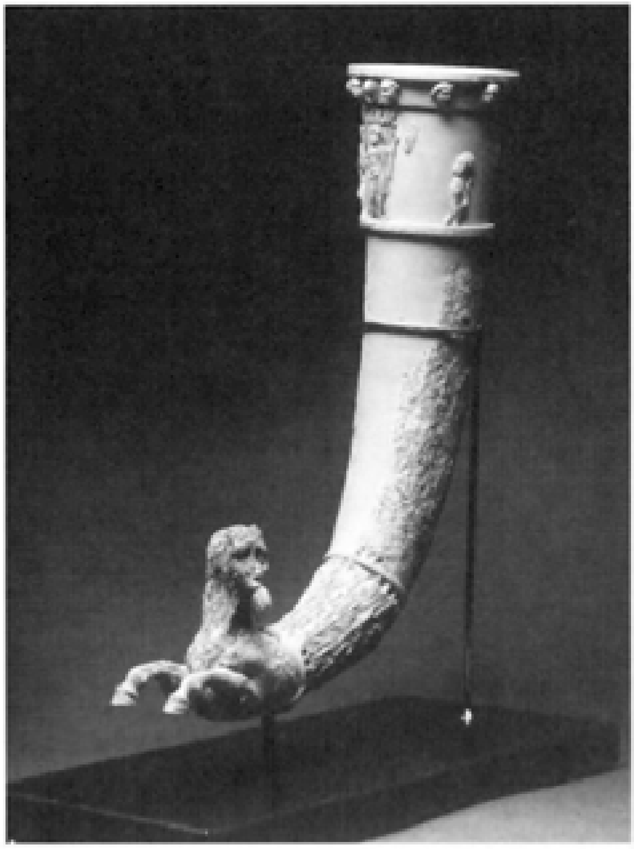


FIG. 12. Nisa. Rhyton. Ivory. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

In the indigenous Parthian lands the Zoroastrian calendar was also used beside the Seleucid era. Moreover Zoroastrian principles found their way into the official ideology of the dynasty. While royal power initially based its authority on the right of conquest, it subsequently sought its justification in religious sanction. The Parthian period probably saw the introduction of the practice of kindling the coronation fires, which was later adopted by the Sasanians.[23] In the eastern sector of the Parthian kingdom Buddhism was spreading fast24 and there were Parthian scholars of Budd hism who went to China and participated in literary and missionary activities. Unfortunately, very little is as yet known about the development of literature. It may, however, be supposed that this was a time when many epic cycles took shape, apparently including the Rustam cycle.

[23] Koshelenko, 1971*a*.
Koshelenko, 1966*a*, pp. 175–83.



FIG. 13. Nisa. Detail of a scene on a rhyton. Ivory. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

6

NOMADS IN EASTERN CENTRAL ASIA*

N. Ishjamts

Contents

Early Mongolia

In the first millennium B.C. Mongolia and the adjoining regions of Central Asia, unlike China and other countries with a settled way of life, constituted a distinctively original nomadic world inhabited by aboriginal tribes and clans, who kept sheep, goats and cattle. One of their principal occupations was the breeding of horses, in particular the Przhevalski horse – which had been domesticated earlier – a small, stocky animal with unusual endurance, widely used by the Huns, Türks and Mongols. The two-humped Bactrian camel was of great importance in the climatic conditions of the Gobi Desert. South of the Gobi Desert, a small number of donkeys and mules were bred. It is interesting to note that the wild ancestors of these horses, camels and asses were still found at that time in the south-western part of the Mongolian Gobi east of the Altai, in Dzungaria and Kazakhstan. In the period under review – 700–300 B.C. – the territory of Mongolia and other parts of

* See Map 4.

Inner Asia knew a fully developed nomadic way of life, often referred to as Central Asian nomadism.

The people who then lived in the territory of what is now Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, Dzungaria and southern Siberia have left behind them an enormous number of 'stone-slab' graves, 'reindeer stones' and other material vestiges of their existence.

The stone-slab graves are so described because at ground level they are bordered by a rectangular wall of stone slabs sunk edgewise into the ground. At one corner of a stone-slab grave there is often a stone column, sometimes decorated with the images of animals. The skeletons found in these graves lie on their backs, usually with their heads turned towards the east, and are accompanied by the bones of domestic animals, clay vessels and other articles. Some of the vessels are made of reddish clay with handles; others are of brownish-grey clay and are covered with hatchings like the clay vessels of the following Hsiung-nu period.

The peoples buried in these graves had fully mastered casting techniques. Their graves contain beautiful bronze objects and iron articles (or vestiges of them). The Scythian-type bronze pots, axes, daggers, arrowheads, bronze and iron horse's bits from the stone-slab graves of Mongolia bear a striking resemblance to similar articles found in the graves of the region beyond the Baikal and in Ordos. Mongolia also boasts many specimens of reindeer stones – stone columns decorated with images of galloping reindeer, sun discs and weapons, which in technique and design have much in common with the 'animal style' of the ancient monuments of representational art found in other parts of the steppe belt of Europe and Asia.

In addition, large numbers of cowries from the Indian Ocean, white cylindrical beads made of prophyllite, fragments of Chinese three-legged vessels, and ornaments of nephrite (rings, discs and half-discs) and mother-of-pearl have been found in the stone-slab graves of Mongolia.[1] For the most part, these objects reached Mongolia through trade with China, Central Asia, Khotan and Afghanistan. The country's cultural links extended throughSogdiana to India and across Kazakhstan as far as the Black Sea and eastern Europe.

The various tribes of the zone, who undoubtedly spoke different languages and were ethnically and culturally different, possessed many articles that were similar in shape. This is especially true of the weapons, horse harness and ornaments. Initially the predominant type of weapon was the bronze-socketed arrowhead with a flat tip (striking area), oval or rhomboid in shape. This was subsequently replaced by the socketed trihedral or pyramidal arrowhead. Horse's bits showed striking similarities. At first, bits with stirrup-shaped end rings were exclusively used, but were later supplanted by bits with rounded rings. With the

[1] Okladnikov, 1955, p. 261.

introduction of bridles and metal bits it became possible to ride on horseback over long distances, and this led to much closer relations between tribes and significantly strengthened economic and cultural contacts between far-flung provinces of the steppe.

In terms of the general level of development, the culture of stone-slab graves and reindeer stones of Mongolia and other parts of the Eurasian steppe belt of the seventh to third centuries B.C. coincided with the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Already by 400–300 B.C. iron articles were widespread in Mongolia and throughout Inner Asia and heralded the beginning of the next stage in development.

According to the ancient Chinese bone inscriptions, the famous *Shih-chi* (Historical Records) of the scholar Szŭ-ma Ch'ien, and other sources, the territory of present-day Mongolia, Inner Mongolia and Dzungaria was in times long past inhabited by the Hsien-yün, the Hsiung-nu and other nomadic cattle-breeding tribes. In the first millennium B.C., these territories were successively inhabited by the Hu, the Tung Hu, the Hsi Hu and the Hsiung-nu.[2] Amongst the above-mentioned peoples, the Hu and the Hsiung-nu occupied the territory of Mongolia. The Tung Hu (which means 'the Eastern Hu' in Chinese) lived in eastern Mongolia and western Manchuria, whereas the Hsi Hu ('the Western Hu') lived in the area to the south-west and west of Mongolia.

The Hsiung-nu Empire

Archaeological evidence from the seventh to the third century B.C. provides a picture of nomadic societies with a patriarchal-clan organization, using slaves obtained through capture or purchase. With the further spread of horse-breeding and the development of bronze culture, the tribal-clan élite grew in strength, while the rank-and-file members of the tribal community were more constricted. The development of property and social differentiations in society led to the disintegration of the clan structure, and with the onset of the Iron Age, quite large nomadic tribal unions came into being.

In the period from the seventh to the third century B.C., more powerful tribal unions arose in Inner Asia – the Hsiung-nu in Ordos and central Mongolia, the Tung Hu in eastern Mongolia and western Manchuria and the Yüeh-chih in Gansu and the lands between Dzungaria and Ordos. To the south, Tangut-Tibetan tribes led a nomadic way of life in the vicinity of Koko Nor (Qinghai). The Central Asian nomadic world was increasingly becoming a military and political power.

[2] Sima Qian, 1931.

Relations between China and the nomads were at times anything but peaceful. China of the Ch'in dynasty (246–207 B.C.) built the famous Great Wall,[3] a military fortification running along the length of its frontier. In 214 B.C. the Ch'in court sent an army of 100,000 men against the Hsiung-nu, captured Ordos from them and then the foothills of theYin-shan. Towards the close of the third century B.C., as a result of their rising prosperity from cattle-breeding, the development of their iron industry and military skill, the twenty-four I Hsiung-nu tribes increased considerably in strength; and from their tribal union the powerful Hsiung-nu Empire emerged.

The dramatic events that attended the emergence of the nomadic Hsiung-nu state find literary, albeit somewhat legendary, expressions in the sources. At the close of the third century B.C., a certain tribal chief, T'ou-man by name, with the title of *shan-yü* – which meant 'the greatest' or 'the best' – headed the Hsiung-nu tribal union. According to legend, he had two sons from different wives. To secure the throne for his favourite younger son, he handed over his elder son, Mao-tun, as a hostage to the Yüeh-chih. T'ou-man then attacked the Yüeh-chih, hoping that they would kill their hostage, but Mao-tun managed to steal a horse and return home. His father put 10,000 families under his control. Mao-tun forthwith set about training his cavalry in the arts of war and ordered all his horsemen to shoot their arrows only in the wake of his whistling arrow. Failure to comply with the order was punishable by death. When he saw that his warriors were adequately trained, Mao-tun, while hunting, shot his father with an arrow and killed him on the spot.

After 209 B.C., when Mao-tun proclaimed himself *shan-yü*, the Hsiung-nu state rapidly became a powerful nomadic empire. Lung-chêng, 'The Dragon Site', the nomadic tribal encampment and headquarters of the Hsiung-nu *shan-yü*, was located in the south-east spurs of the Khangay mountains, in a region where Karakorum and other political centres of the Turkic and Mongol peoples were later to come into being. The leader of the Hsiung-nu became the keeper of the nephritic seal which was inscribed with the words: 'The state seal of the Hsiung-nu *shan-yü'*. The rise of a Hsiung-nu state system, with a capital for the *shan-yü*, a seal, flag, border guards and the other attributes of sovereignty, marked the beginnings of a distinctive nomadic power.[4]

The Tung Hu, who heard that Mao-tun had killed his father, decided to take advantage of the resulting confusion and demanded that Mao-tun should surrender to them his treasured *argamak* (a fleet-footed horse) and his beloved wife. Mao-tun agreed to both demands. They then demanded an uninhabited strip of the desert, unsuitable for cattle-breeding, but Mao-tun answered: 'Land is the foundation of a state. How can it be surrendered?' He then

[3] Bai Shouyi, 1980, p. 116.
[4] Konovalov, 1976, p. 3.

launched a military campaign against the Tung Hu, who were taken completely unawares and routed. On his return, he attacked the Yüeh-chih, driving them westward, subjugated the Wu-sun of Semirechye and recaptured Ordos.

In 198 B.C., a treaty of 'peace and alliance' was concluded between the Hsiung-nu and China. The Han emperor officially recognized that the Hsiung-nu Empire enjoyed power comparable to that of his own empire, and that its sovereignty extended over all the northern lands beyond the Chinese borders. The ruler of the Hsiung-nu, in turn, recognized the sovereignty of the Chinese emperor over all territory behind the Great Wall.[5] The treaty further provided that the Han court should give the emperor's daughter in marriage to the *shan-yü* and should send him every year a lavish quantity of gifts – silks, fabrics, handicrafts, rice, gold and money, which was regarded by the Hsiung-nu as a form of tribute. The Hsiung-nu also received tribute from the Wu-huan and subjugated other peoples; they sent their royal daughters to the Wu-sun and held hostages.

Controlling a key section of the Silk Route, the caravan trade link between China and the West, the Hsiung-nu reaped great profits from its international trade. They zealously fought to maintain control of these routes and successfully vied with China for the hegemony of Central Asia.

From the time of Mao-tun, there was regular trade between the Hsiung-nu and theChinese, the Hsiung-nu exchanging cattle, wool and furs for Chinese goods. Between 129 and 90 B.C., however, the Han emperor Wu-ti changed the policy of his predecessors and launched a number of major military campaigns against the Hsiung-nu, but he was unsuccessful. When the Han court proposed that the Hsiung-nu should become a vassal state, they detained the Chinese ambassador and refused to discuss the matter, decapitating their own master of ceremonies who had allowed the ambassador to enter his yurt.

Between 70 and 60 B.C. there was internecine war between various factions of the Hsiung-nu leadership seeking the throne. When Hu-han-yeh became *shan-yü*, one of his brothers proclaimed himself *shan-yü* and attacked him. Hu-han-yeh was obliged to acknowledge his subordination to China in 53 B.C., but managed to preserve Hsiung-nu statehood with all its symbols of sovereignty. When he finally crushed his rival, Hu-han-yeh was able to act more and more independently and transferred his headquarters to the Ulan Bator region, where it remained after his death. But in A.D. 48, as a result of worsening internal dissension, the Hsiung-nu split into two factions. The elders of the eight southern tribes proclaimed the aristocrat Pi as *shan-yü*, migrated to China, fell under the sway of the Han court and moved to Ordos, north and west Shaanxi.

[5] Taskin, 1968, pp. 25, 42, 47, 48.

The Northern Hsiung-nu stubbornly defended their independence, but eventually, in A.D. 93, they were attacked by an alliance of the Chinese and Southern Hsiung-nu from the south, by the Ting-ling, red-bearded, blue-eyed giants from the north, and by the Hsien-pi from the east. The last Northern *shan-yü*, descended from Mao-tun, was killed, and Mongolia was taken over by the Hsien-pi. Some of the Hsiung-nu, notably those of the western branch, did not surrender.

The Hu-yen, an ancient Hun tribe, assumed leadership and marched westward. In contrast to the Southern and Northern Huns, they may be described as Western Huns, whose descendants would later reach Afghanistan, India and the Roman Empire.

The Hsien-pi state

The Hsien-pi, who took over control of Mongolia after the fall of the Hsiung-nu state, had emerged as a powerful tribal union as early as the first century B.C. The main clan of the Hsien-pi had set up their nomadic camp in south-east Mongolia and lived along the middle course of the Liao-ho river. A large number of Hsien-pi now settled in central Mongolia and over 100,000 Hsiung-nu families, who had settled there earlier, adopted their tribal name. T'an-shih-huai, leader of the Hsien-pi tribal union, in A.D. 155 established the Hsien-pi state, which rapidly became one of the most powerful empires of its day, as powerful as the previous Hsiung-nu Empire. The Han court considered that the Hsien-pi's horses were swifter and their weapons sharper than those of the Hsiung-nu, and the Hsien-pi, too, managed to acquire good-quality iron from the border regions of China. Their political centre, the headquarters of T'an-shih-huai, was in the south-east near the Darkhan mountains but was later moved to the former *shan-yü*'s headquarters in the Khangay mountains.[6]

Between A.D. 155 and 166, T'an-shih-huai conducted a series of major military campaigns that led to the extension of Hsien-pi power over the Great Steppe as far as southern Siberia and from Ussuri to the Caspian Sea. Until the third decade of the third century A.D. the Hsien-pi state was the leading power in Central Asia.

Under their rule Mongolia saw a complex ethnocultural development. From the mixing of the Huns and Hsien-pi a new culture emerged with its own linguistic particularities, which was later to serve as the point of departure for the formation of the early Mongolian ethnic group with its distinctive language and culture.[7]

Subsequently the Hsien-pi state split into several parts. Until the close of the third century, it only effectively controlled central and south-east Mongolia. The Mu-yung, T'o-pa

[6] Perlee, 1961, p. 21.
[7] Bira, 1977, pp. 379–80.

and T'u-yü-hun, kindred tribes of the Hsien-pi, seceded to set up separate states in the south. At about the same time another Mongolian-speaking people appeared on the scene in central Mongolia – the Ju-jan, who were destined to play a key role in the history of the period following that of the Hsien-pi.[8]

The economy, social structure and state organization of the Hsiung-nu

The major achievement of the ancestors of the Hsiung-nu was the opening up of the steppes and the Mongolian Gobi. Until then, the Great Steppe and the desert, like the sea, had divided the inhabited wooded steppe into two distinct and separate belts. The inhabitants of each belt – agriculturists, sedentary cattle-breeders and forest hunters – had no way of crossing the Gobi, and the steppe grasslands went to waste unused. The Hsiung-nu bred a large number of horses and draught oxen and introduced as a mobile home the covered wagon on high wheels. They were the first to engage in nomadic cattle-breeding (Fig. 1) and in organized hunts – infinitely more productive than individual hunting – and by the third century B.C. were practising falconry.[9]

Apart from cattle-breeding and hunting, they engaged in agriculture, as can be seen from the grain hullers found in Mongolia and in the regions of the Great Wall. War prisoners and deserters from China and other settled countries were widely used as agricultural labourers.

Their covered wagons on high wheels, in which they lived, were comfortable, providing good protection from wind and frost, and more security, because in the event of danger, the wagon-dwellers could flee with all their possessions to other encampments.

Although the Hsiung-nu Empire was made up of a large number of different peoples, the Hsiung-nu themselves were divided into twenty-four major tribes, each consisting of kinship groups, clans and patriarchal families. The Hu-yen, Hsü-pu and Lan were regarded as the oldest and most prominent, but from the time of Mao-tun, the Hsiung-nu *shan-yü* came from another noble family, the Lüan-ti, that became the most distinguished of them all.

The tribal nobility formed the aristocratic élite, while the rank-and-file members of the tribe were relatively poor. There were quite a number of slaves engaged in agriculture, handicrafts and cattle-breeding,[10] but they were more like domestic servants. It will be

[8] Ishjamts, 1974, pp. 24–6.
[9] Gumilev, 1960, p. 96.
[10] De Guignes, 1756–58, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 15.

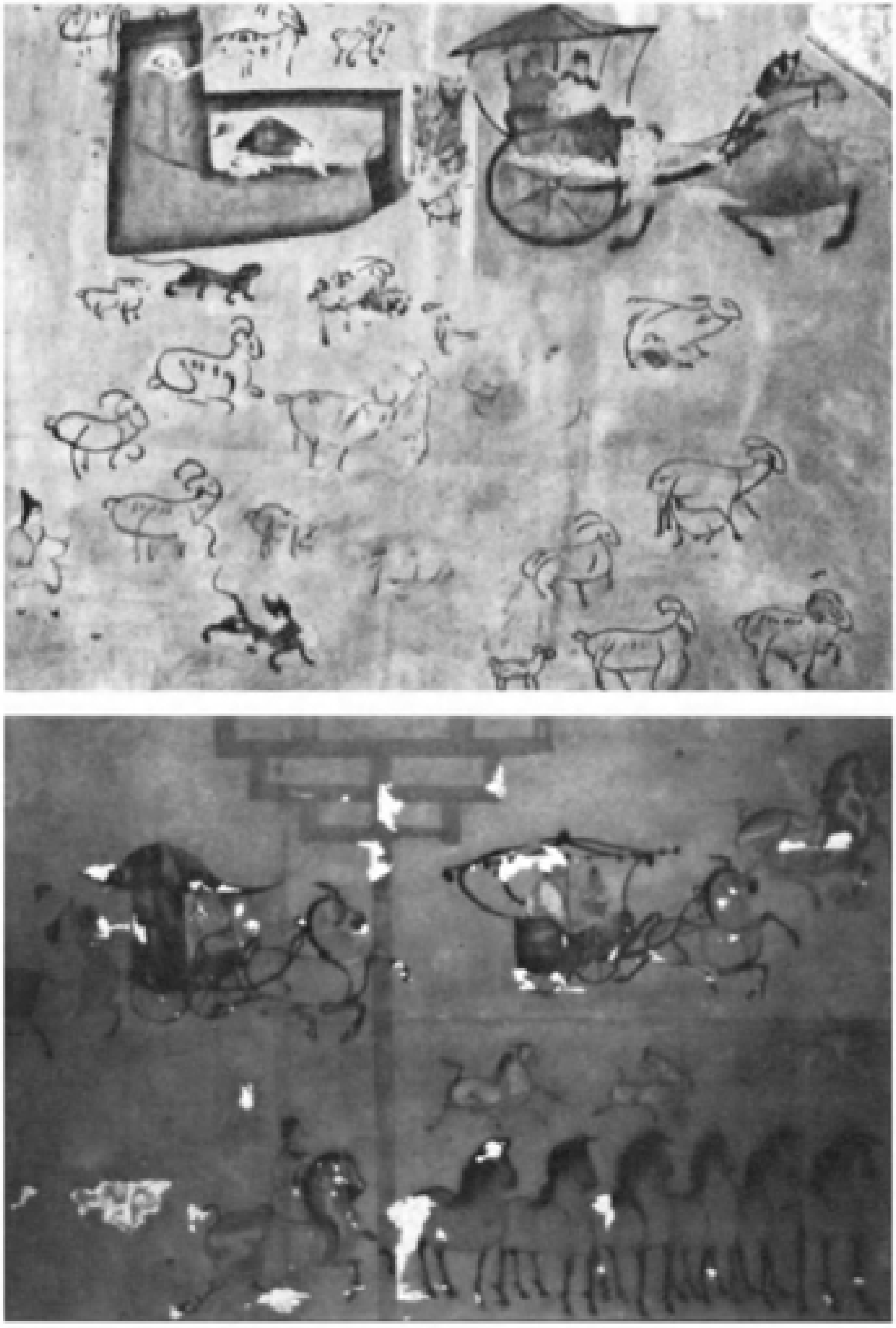


FIG. 1. Nomadic cattle-breeding of the Hsiung-nu. Drawings from cemeteries of Inner Mongolia (China).

seen that Hsiung-nu society was in a state of transition from a tribal to a class system, and the Hsiung-nu Empire represented a particular form of class-based state organization.[11]

[11] Harmatta, 1952, p. 287.

The ruler of the empire was the *shan-yü*. He called himself '*ch'eng-li kut'u*' (Son of Heaven).[12] His power was considerable and hereditary but by no means absolute. In their administration it is even possible to identify several classes of officials or, to be more precise, nobles divided into eastern and western groups, terms which also signify 'senior' or 'junior'. The first class consisted of the Chu-ch'i princes ('*chu-ch'i*' meaning 'wisdom'). The Eastern Chu-ch'i prince was supposed to be the heir apparent, but at times his right to succeed to the throne was disregarded. The second class consisted of the Lu-li princes; the third class, the Great Leaders; the fourth class, the Great Tu-yü; the fifth class, the Great Tang Hu. In addition, the Eastern and Western Chu-ch'i princes and the Lu-li princes were called 'four horns' and the 'great leaders', Tu-yü and Tang Hu were called 'six horns'. These high-ranking figures were always members of the *shan-yü*'s clan.

Alongside this aristocracy of blood there grew up an aristocracy of talent – the service nobility (not related to the *shan-yü*'s family). They were known by the name of Ku-tu-hou, and were aides of the highest-ranking nobility, performing all the administrative tasks. Apart from this top-level aristocracy, there was the clan nobility – princes affiliated exclusively with the clans, *sui generis* clan chiefs or elected elders.

Hsiung-nu society possessed its own customary legal system and Chinese authors have noted that 'their laws were simple and easily executed'. Major crimes, such as the drawing of a sword, were punishable by death and theft was punished by confiscation not only of the thief's property but also that of his family. Minor crimes were punished by cuts on the face. Trials lasted no more than ten days, and at no one time were there ever more than a few dozen people under arrest. Apart from the customary law a system of public law began to emerge under Mao-tun. Violation of military discipline and evasion of military service both carried the death penalty. These extraordinary laws contributed greatly to strengthening the cohesion of the Hsiung-nu, turning them into the most powerful state in Central Asia.

Hsiung-nu burials and the finds from Noin-Ula

The main sources for the study of the Hsiung-nu are their graves and settlements, the latter to a lesser degree in view of their nomadic way of life. Many of them are to be found in Mongolia, southern Siberia and Ordos. There are four major Hsiung-nu burial sites: two in central Mongolia and two in the south beyond Lake Baikal. The largest, the Khunui-göl, is located in a remote area of the Khangay mountains, in the basin of the River Khunui. It was here, in 1956, that T. Dorzhsuren and other Mongolian archaeologists counted over 300

[12] Ban Gu, Vol. 13, Chapter 97a: 7a.

burials.[13] In the mountains of Noin-Ula, 122 km north of Ulan Bator, 212 burial grounds have been recorded. At the end of the last century, the Russian archaeologist Y. D. Tal'ko-Grintsevich located 214 graves at Sudzhinsk beyond the Baikal, 10 km east of Kyakhta. He also excavated the Derestui burial ground in the former Selenga District beyond Lake Baikal, with some 260 burials. It seems likely that these four large burial grounds belonged to the four noble clans of the Hsiung-nu, and that Mao-tun and other early *shan-yü* were interred in the Khunui-göl burial ground, which contains some of the most magnificent Hsiung-nu tombs, while Hu-han-yeh and his descendants were buried in Noin-Ula.

Of particular interest are the contents of the burial chamber of a tomb in the Noin-Ula mountains accidentally discovered in 1912 by a Mongol Gold engineer and scientifically excavated in 1924. Like other tombs nearby, Noin-Ula Tomb No. 6 was square, with sides measuring 24.5 m and an embankment 1.62–1.95 m high. On the south side it was also protected by a long bank. The sides of the square and the bank were faced with stone and aligned to the points of the compass. In the inner chamber stood coffins, pointing south, on a floor of planks which showed faint traces of lacquer and paint. Among the objects found was a woollen canopy covering the ceiling of the outer chamber and a heavy felt carpet, with scenes of animals locked in combat, lying under the coffin. A woollen cloth with embroidered plant motifs and figures of different animals was affixed to the ceiling of the outer chamber, covering practically its whole surface. The fortunate discovery of a Chinese lacquer cup with two inscriptions made it possible to date Tomb No. 6 quite closely to the beginning of the first century A.D. It is, in fact, the tomb of Wu-chu-lü, the *shan-yü* of the Hsiung-nu Empire.

To judge from the finds in the Noin-Ula tombs, permanent dwellings of the Hsiung-nu were equipped with plank beds, and their mobile dwellings were furnished with low tables on short legs. The height of these tables indicates that people sat round them on the floor, which was covered with heavy felt. It is interesting to note that such small, low tables were extensively used by Central Asian cattle-breeding peoples.

The Noin-Ula tombs contained a large variety of Hsiung-nu vessels of wood, metal and clay. The most remarkable metal vessel was a bronze oil-lamp mounted on three legs with a conical stem for a wick in the centre. There were fragments of a big bronze kettle for cooking meat, and a smaller kettle, notable for its handles in the shape of animal heads. Among other finds were minute pyrite crystals, pierced with holes and used as dress ornaments, beads of malachite and glass of different colours and amber beads of various shapes and sizes. Of particular interest was an amber bead in the shape of a lion's head. Apart from the beads contained in Hsiung-nu graves of ordinary type, mainly of women, bronze

[13] Dorzhsuren, 1958, p. 6.

mirrors and various dress ornaments that belonged to the various *shan-yü* have come to light.

Their main form of transport was the saddle-horse. Horse bridles, bits and saddles resembled those of the Altai in Scythian times. Saddles generally consisted of two leather cushions padded with wool, but a few had a wooden frame with pommels at the front and back, and stirrups. The stirruped saddle represented a major step forward.

In spite of the fact that iron and smelting techniques were known to the Hsiung-nu and that they could produce various kinds of iron objects, they did not strike fire from a flint, but obtained it by rubbing two sticks together or, more exactly, by boring one into the other. The Noin-Ula graves, thanks to the fine state of preservation of the wood found there, provide a full range of articles used for fire-making.

The most remarkable piece of bone jewellery work was a carved cylinder representing a winged and horned mythical wolf. Especially notable were the embroidered felt carpets of local manufacture found in the Noin-Ula tombs. The seams of the middle section of the carpets were embroidered in a distinctive spiral pattern, and their borders were covered with a design in which scenes of fighting animals alternated with tree patterns.

The Hsiung-nu were in direct and close contact not only with China but with neighbouring peoples to the east and west, who were culturally very much like them. A remarkable bronze crown in the shape of a wolf's head from Noin-Ula may be compared to the figures of wolf heads in the art of the Altaic Scythians. Other Hsiung-nu articles in Mongolia and Ordos display striking similarities with southern Siberian works of art. Animals are portrayed with protruding haunches – a style very characteristic of the art found here.

Of particular interest are the scenes of combat between a yak and a horned 'lion' and a griffin attacking a deer, on the felt carpets of Noin-Ula (Fig. 2, 3– 4). The yak is highly stylized with an abnormally large head hanging low and a protruding tongue. Scenes of beasts of prey attacking artiodactyla have been characteristic of the art of the peoples of Western Asia since early times – a motif that entered Asia Minor from Mesopotamia and spread through the Sakas to southern Siberia and then to the Hsiung-nu.

Motifs borrowed from the plant kingdom are exceedingly rare in the art of Eurasian nomadic tribes, such as the Hsiung-nu. All the more interesting, therefore, are the conventional representations of trees on the Noin-Ula carpets in the spaces between the animal combat scenes. Here we have a replica of the 'sacred tree', a typical feature of Assyrian art. Hsiung-nu felt carpets were decorated with borders of squares, crosses, 'battle-axes' and other figures. The most widespread motif on the seams of the felt carpets consisted of rhomboids or spirals arranged in two varieties. It is interesting to note that this Hsiung-nu motif later found widespread application in the art of the Mongolian and Turkic peoples



FIG. 2. Hsiung-nu felt carpet from Noin-Ula (Mongolia).



FIG. 3. Hsiung-nu felt carpet from Noin-Ula (Mongolia).

and can still be seen today on the felt carpets and the protective covers of the Buryats, Kyrgyz and Kazakhs.

While there is no real trace of the influence of Chinese art on objects found in the graves of common people, traces are to be found in those of the nobility. The mythological animal embroidered on the silk fabrics found in Noin-Ula is essentially Chinese in character. Its body resembles an eagle with upraised tail, of which the tuft is abnormally large. The animal's paws are like the tiger paws in the art of the Altaic and southern Siberian tribes



FIG. 4. Hsiung-nu felt carpet from Noin-Ula (Mongolia).

of Scythian date. The front of the chest is represented by a succession of superimposed scales, and the wings are in the Persian style of the Achaemenids. Thus we have here an example of the influences of Hsiung-nu, Altaic, Scythian and Persian art on fabrics of Chinese character.

Hsiung-nu customs, religion and culture

The influence of the Hsiung-nu and also of Middle and Western Asia on China was especially great in the military field. As early as 307 B.C., Wu Ling Wang, a prince of the Chou dynasty, introduced the use of the dress of the nomadic Hu into China and began to instruct his subjects in the art of shooting with bow-and-arrow. The Emperor Ch'in Shih-huang-ti introduced large cavalry detachments into the Chinese army and thereby ensured the success of his operations against the Hsiung-nu at Mên Ch'ien Yang. His cavalrymen were heavily armed and armoured, like those of the Assyrian army which had introduced cavalry as an arm of their military organization, and already used chain mail, plate armour and protective armour for horses.[14]

When Mao-tun reorganized the Hsiung-nu army, he replaced its heavily armed horsemen by light cavalry, armed with long composite bows, creating a military force with much greater manoeuvrability. He reorganized his army, subjected it to strict discipline, and introduced major improvements in military strategy and tactics. These developments

[14] Laufer, 1914, p. 217; Kiselev, 1951, p. 321.

in military science and weaponry were of great importance both for China and other countries. The composite bow and the stirruped saddle were widely adopted throughout the Eurasian steppe, Parthia and Syria; and the descendants of the Hsiung-nu with their traditional bows later became one of the most dangerous adversaries of the Roman legionaries in Pannonia.[15]

The emergence of its powerful empire had a great influence on the Hsiung-nu's material and spiritual life. Although it could not radically change their nomadic ways, it led to the establishment of an entirely new central headquarters for their *shan-yü* in the Khangay mountains where, in addition to his residence, they erected a sanctuary and other buildings. Settlements appeared in the steppe – fortified places for agricultural and craft communities like Gua-dov (367 × 360 m), Baruun dereegiin kherem (345 × 335 m) in Mongolia and the settlement at Ivolginsk (348 × 200 m) beyond Lake Baikal. In the Talas valley under the rule of Chih-chih a fortress showing distinct Roman influence was built, and more than 100 foot-soldiers were garrisoned there. It has been suggested that they may have been Roman legionaries from the defeated army of Crassus who had surrendered to the Parthians after the battle of Carrhae in 53 B.C. and been sent to serve on their eastern frontier at Merv, from where they became mercenaries of the Hsiung-nu. Nevertheless, the *shan-yü* of the Hsiung-nu did not alter their way of life. They continued to receive ambassadors in their yurts which were now more presentable than in earlier days. The overwhelming majority of the Hsiung-nu, especially the rank-and-file, also continued to live in yurts. The image of a yurt of that period, a covered wagon on high wheels drawn by oxen, found on one of the south Siberian stone sculptures, and the miniature images of a harness yoke found among the south Siberian and north Chinese bronze articles, need not cause any surprise.[16] In these yurts of the Hsiung-nu, as later in those of the Mongols and Türks, the left side of the entrance was for men and the right side for women.

Hunting and archery played a major role in their daily life and existence; and a reference in the *Shih-chi* shows that they actively encouraged their children to learn hunting from an early age: 'As soon as a boy is able to ride a ram, he shoots birds and small game with a bow, and when he gets to be a little older, he shoots foxes and hares.'[17] The Hsiung-nu women were not only remarkable horse-riders but had bows and arrows, and assisted their husbands in defending children and old people from enemy attack. On the wall of the Talas fortress they fought valiantly beside their husbands and the Romans against the Chinese troops, and they were the last to leave their posts. The participation of women in defence

[15] Uray-Köhalmi, 1974, p. 148.
[16] Bira et al., 1984, p. 48.
[17] Bichurin, 1950, Vol. I, p. 40.

and the training of children to handle the bow-and-arrow were evidently dictated by the necessities of life. Only in this way could the nomadic Hsiung-nu, a numerically small group, defend their independence and way of life.

The Hsiung-nu practised exogamy, but their *shan-yü* could only take wives from a limited number of noble clans. They practised polygamy and levirate marriage was customary, that is, on the death of a father or elder brother, a wife was transferred to a surviving son or younger brother, provided that she was not that man's mother. The *shan-yü*'s court also complied with this practice.

The *Shih-chi* says that on the death of a Hsiung-nu emperor his close relatives and concubines were buried with him, but archaeological excavations do not bear this out. If such a custom had ever been practised by the Hsiung-nu, the actual burial of people had long been replaced by symbolic actions. After the death of her husband, a Hsiung-nu woman would place a lock of her hair in her husband's grave as a sign of mourning, symbolizing her journey to the next world to accompany him.

The Hsiung-nu initially believed in animism, totemism and in life beyond the grave. From the time of Mao-tun, Shamanism became the state religion. The chief shaman was chosen from the sorcerers and served the *shan-yü*, his clan and relatives. The head-dress of a shaman was found in one of the graves of Noin-Ula and was very reminiscent of the Mongol darkhans' head-dress, the only difference being in the frontal representation of the totem spirits. On the Hsiung-nu head-dress there is a bird, which may represent the face of the anthropomorphic spirit of an ancestor.

The Hsiung-nu worshipped the sun, the moon and other heavenly bodies and made sacrificial offerings to the heavens, the earth, spirits and their ancestors. The *shan-yü* described himself as 'born of heaven and earth, brought forth by the sun and moon'. The *Shih-chi* says: 'At daybreak the *shan-yü* sets out from camp to worship the rising sun, at nightfall to worship the moon.'[18] The Hsiung-nu nobles gathered at the *shan-yü*'s headquarters in the fifth lunar month and made sacrificial offerings to their ancestors, the heavens, the earth and the spirits. Three times a year they congregated at the shrine of the moon where, on the day of the 'dog' of the first, fifth and ninth months, they offered sacrifices to the heavenly spirit.

It is not known whether the Hsiung-nu had images of their ancestors or spirits. Of great interest, in that regard, was the discovery, in the Noin-Ula tomb, of a translucent stone 5 mm thick, with a schematic incised representation of a human figure. Three holes bored into the figure indicate that it was attached to something. It may have been some kind of

[18] Ibid., p. 50.



FIG. 5. Runic characters of Hsiung-nu–Hsien-pi script (Mongolia and Inner Mongolia).

anthropomorphic amulet. The Hsiung-nu prince who ruled over the region of Koko Nor and Gansu worshipped a huge 'golden idol'.

In reckoning time the Hsiung-nu used a duodecimal animal cycle in which the days of the 'dog' and the 'snake' were regarded as auspicious for worship. This duodecimal cycle, which reached the Hsiung-nu from India or Babylon via Sogdiana, remained in force for as long as the Hsiung-nu existed. Their basic system of calculation, however, was decimal, and they used this in their military organization. They customarily launched a military expedition at the time of the full moon, but its outcome hinged on the prophecies of the shamans, sorcerers and soothsayers. Like the Mongols, they used a ram's shoulder-bone to predict the future, placing the bone in a fire, and reading the future from the lines which appeared on it.

The Chinese sources say that the Hsiung-nu did not have an ideographic form of writing as the Chinese did, but in the second century B.C. a renegade Chinese dignitary by the name of Yue 'taught the *shan-yü* how to write official letters to the Chinese court on a wooden tablet 31 cm long, and to use a seal and large-sized folder'. But the same sources indicate that when the Hsiung-nu noted down something or transmitted a message, they made cuts on a piece of wood (*k'o-mu*) and they also mention a 'Hu script'. The fact is that over twenty carved characters were discovered among the objects at Noin-Ula and other Hun burial sites in Mongolia and the region beyond Lake Baikal (Figs. 5 and 6). Most of these characters are either identical or very similar to letters of the Orkhon-Yenisey script of the Türks of the Early Middle Ages that occurs now and again in the Eurasian steppes. From this some specialists hold that the Hsiung-nu had a script similar to ancient Eurasian runiform, and that this alphabet itself later served as the basis for ancient Turkic writing.

Myths, legends and other forms of oral literature occupied an important place in Hsiung-nu spiritual life. Tradition has it that in front of the headquarters of the *shan-yü* there was an artificial pool, the dwelling place of a dragon who had fallen from heaven and become



FIG. 6. Runic characters of Hsiung-nu–Hsien-pi script (Mongolia and Inner Mongolia).

an object of worship. It was not only the Chinese who worshipped the dragon. While the sources portray the Hsiung-nu as a redoubtable nation of fierce warriors, they were actually fun-loving people. They would gather before the headquarters of the *shan-yü* and the temple of their ancestors to organize amusements like horse-jumping and camel races and other festivities. They would sing slow songs, a custom that later became widespread among the Mongolians. The sounds of flutes and drums and the strains of a few types of string instruments were heard throughout the steppes. As early as the beginning of the second century B.C. Hsiung-nu music and dances were favoured by the Han emperor. The *k'ung-hou* and the fife, which had come at an earlier time to Inner Asia from Sogdiana, were adopted by the Chinese from the Hsiung-nu.

Many Chinese silks and embroidered fabrics as well as cloth of Western origin were found in the Noin-Ula tombs. There was one woollen wall carpet of Western manufacture and two of Yüeh-chih or Wu-sun origin, a series of embroideries provisionally described as 'Graeco-Bactrian', two portraits displaying similar workmanship and, finally, a tapestry

from Parthia or Asia Minor. There were also some remarkable fragments of wall hangings, decorated with patterns representing horsemen, a child warrior flinging a spear or a trident at an eagle, lion griffins and garlands of flowers that have been described in detail by K. V. Trever.[19] The two horsemen depicted on the largest fragment are of Europoid type, with moustaches and tufts of hair over their foreheads reminiscent of Gandhāran sculpture. Their dress and head-dress are typically Iranian. The horses are notable for their coats of different colours, their cropped manes, their elegant long-necked heads and their long slender legs. They were probably the famous thoroughbred Parthian war-horses or the remarkable 'thousand-li' horses of the Hsiung-nu. Along the lower edge of the fragment, between two broad bands, is an embroidered garland of palm leaves interspersed with acacia flowers, their tendrils entwined – a border that is Greek or Graeco-Indian in design.[20] Of the two portraits found on the fragments, one has preserved the face of a man whose features are not Mongolian, but bear a much closer resemblance to the Turanian type found in Central Asia and Persia. Trever compared this portrait to the heads found on the bas-reliefs of Gandhāran art and concluded that it represented one of the peoples of Central Asia whose culture was in contact with the Hellenized culture of Central Asia, such as that of the Graeco-Bactrians. It is clear that these works are representative of a great artistic culture and consummate craftsmanship.

This nomadic civilization of the Hsiung-nu exerted an influence even on the more advanced cultures of China.[21] We might mention in this context the Hsiung-nu treatment of the tiger, one of the prototypes of the Chinese *tao-tê*, of winged wolves, goats and horses and, finally, of the bizarre 'aquiline griffon', a fabulous animal with the body of a winged lion and the head of a phoenix.

Hsien-pi culture

Hsien-pi culture was also suggestive of Hsiung-nu culture in many ways; but so far it has not been adequately studied. Between the first and third centuries A.D. it attained a similar level to the culture of the Hsiung-nu. According to historical sources, the Hsien-pi also recorded events by incising wooden tablets. In their practice of Shamanism, they initially worshipped a wooden idol. However, later on, the casting of idols from iron and other metals (Fig. 7) became widespread among the Hsien-pi, as among many other nomadic peoples of Central Asia. In later centuries, other branches of the Hsien-pi tribe, the Mu-yung, T'o-pa and T'u-yü-hun in Inner Mongolia and northern China, created a more advanced

[19] Trever, 1940, pp. 141–3, Plates 39, 40, 41, 42, 43–44.
[20] Rostovtzeff, 1929, p. 87.
[21] Serodzhav, 1977, pp. 4, 22, 106, 109–11.



FIG. 7. Hsien-pi terracotta from Inner Mongolia.

form of culture, inheriting many elements from the Hsiung-nu and also borrowing a great deal from the neighbouring countries of Central Asia, China, East, Turkestan and southern Siberia. In turn, the Hsien-pi also exerted an influence on them.

The original and distinctive culture of the Hsiung-nu and of the Hsien-pi together constituted the first important stage in the formation of the nomadic civilization of Central Asia, playing an important role between East and West and linking China and Central Asia, while, at the same time, remaining distinctive – a very significant contribution to world culture.

7

The Yüeh-chih and their Migrations*

K. Enoki, G. A. Koshelenko and Z. Haidary

Contents

The Yüeh-chih in Gansu

The Yüeh-chih are the people who, from the latter half of the second century B.C. to the beginning of the first century A.D., occupied and ruled what is now Middle Asia and Afghanistan. They destroyed a country called Ta-hsia – usually identified with the Bactrian kingdom under the Greeks. Their original home is said to have been in the western part of Gansu Province in China, from which they migrated via the northern part of the T'ien Shan mountain range. They were forced to migrate because of the invasion of the Hsiung-nu, who became predominant in Central Asia. The Yüeh-chih settled to the north of the Amu Darya and ruled the country of Ta-hsia, which lies south of the same river. There they established five *hsi-hou* (*yabghu*) or governor-generalships. At the beginning of

* See Map 4.

the first century A.D., the Kushans, one of the five *yabghu*, became powerful and took the place of the Yüeh-chih. This is an outline of the history of the Yüeh-chih. Nothing more is known about them except that the Chinese emperor Wu-ti (140–87 B.C.) of the Former Han sent Chang Ch'ien to the Yüeh-chih to negotiate a military alliance against the Hsiung-nu, but this was not concluded.

Many theories have been published about who the Yüeh-chih were. The oldest theories were based solely on the resemblance of the name of the Yüeh-chih to that of the Goths or Massagetae. But the Goths could have had nothing to do with a people in Central Asia in the second century B.C. Nor can the identification of the Yüeh-chih with the Massagetae, who lived in the plain east of the Caspian and Aral Seas in the fifth century B.C., be maintained.

The identification of the Yüeh-chih with Casia [1] is also based on the similarity of the names Yüeh-chih and Casia, but there is some additional positive evidence to support it. 'Casia' is the name given by the Greeks in the century A.D. to the Kunlun mountain range in the south of the Tarim basin and to the region stretching north of it, which is famous even today for the production of jade. According to the *Book of Kuan-tzŭ*, jade was produced either in the country of the Yü-chih, who are considered to be identical with the Yüeh-chih, or in the mountains on their frontier. The *Book of Kuan-tzŭ* is some time before the third century B.C., when the Yüeh-chih dominated the greater part of Mongolia. So it is quite possible that 'Yü-chih', 'Yüeh-chih' and 'Casia' represent the same name; and that the Yüeh-chih were known to the Chinese to be associated with jade.[2] Presumably jade was known by the name of *casia* because it was produced in the country of the Yüeh-chih, or the Yüeh-chih were known by the name of Casia because of their jade. In a place near modern Khotan in the ancient region of Casia, jade is still called *gutscha;* and '*gutscha*' is very similar to the old pronunciation of Yüeh-chih, which may have been '*zgujǎ*'[3] or something like that. If the jade was called *casia* because of the Yüeh-chih, the country of Casia might have been the place where the Yüeh-chih originated. But the Yüeh-chih were a great horde of pastoral people, and had 100,000 or 200,000 cavalrymen, according to the *Shih-chi* (Book 123), when they reached the Amu Darya. This makes it unlikely that

[1] Egami, 1948, pp. 84 et seq., 1951, pp. 123 et seq.

[2] Concerning the Yü-chih as described in the *Book of Kuan-tzŭ*, see Matsuda, 1939, and Kuwabara, 1940, pp. 8–9, 71. See also Wang, 1927, and Pelliot, 1929, p. 150. The latest publication on the *Book of Kuan-tzŭ* concerning the parts in which references are made to the Yü-chih is Ma, 1979, Vol. 1, p. 255; Vol. 2, pp. 411, 429, 460, 462, 560, 569–70. According to Professor Ma, these parts of the *Kuan-tzŭ* were compiled in its present form at various times from the beginning of the Former Han to the reign of Wang Mang, that is to say, from 200 B.C. to A.D. 12. Professor Ma also tries to establish the identity of the Yü-chih with the Yüeh-chih in his other book (Ma, 1982, pp. 476–7).

[3] Reconstruction made by Haloun, 1937, p. 316. See also a new reconstruction made by Pulleyblank, 1966, p. 17.

they could have originated in a place such as Casia where the oases could only support a population of a few thousand at the time of the Han dynasty. It must also be remembered that no other nomadic people has ever risen to power in any part of the Tarim basin where Casia was situated. If the Yüeh-chih were called by the name of Casia, because of the *casia* or jade they produced, they must also have had another name of their own. What is certain, however, is that the region of Casia and other countries in the Tarim basin were under the control of the Yüeh-chih; although it is most likely that Casia was the native place of the Yüeh-chih.

Recently Yang Hsien-i[4] has identified Chü-chih in the *Tso-chuan* under the fourteenth year of Duke Hsiang (559 B.C.) with the Yüeh-chih. There is indeed a resemblance between the two names, and there is the statement of Wu-li, the ancestor of Chü-chih, who was deported to Kua-chou, which the Yüeh-chih occupied in a later period. But Chü-chih is called Jung-tzŭ, or a barbarian of the West, in the *Tso-chuan*, and the tribe to which he belonged Ch'iang-jung, or the Ch'iang barbarians of the West. In other words, Chü-chih is not a tribal name, but a personal one. Moreover Kua-chou, to which the ancestor of Chü-chih was exiled, was not the place where he lived permanently. For these reasons, even if Chü-chih (a personal name) can represent the same sound as Yüeh-chih (a tribal name), Chü-chih cannot be regarded as identical with the Yüeh-chih.

According to Strabo, the Bactrian kingdom was destroyed by the invasion of four peoples: the Asioi, the Pasianoi, the Tocharoi and the Sakarauloi, all of whom came from beyond the Syr Darya. According to Pompeius Trogus, the Asiani were lords of the Tocharians and conquered the Sacaraucae. Szŭ-ma Ch'ien, who undoubtedly derived his information from the report of Chang Ch'ien, states that the Yüeh-chih conquered and ruled Ta-hsia. Attempts have been made in the past to reconcile the three statements by identifying the Yüeh-chih with one of four peoples, in the belief that 'Ta-hsia' meant the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom and that Szŭ-ma Ch'ien tells us of the conquest of that kingdom. Some scholars think that the Asioi, the Asiani and the Pasianoi are one and the same people, who are to be identified with the Yüeh-chih, 'Pasianoi' being a corruption of 'Gasianoi'. Others suggest that the Tocharoi should be identified with the Yüeh-chih because the Yüeh-chih occupied the western part of Gansu Province, which is called Thogara in the *Geography* of Ptolemy; because Tocharistan was where the Bactrian kingdom was situated; and because the Asiani, as described by Pompeius Trogus, were the ruling family of the Yüeh-chih.

It is, however, uncertain whether the country of Ta-hsia in Szŭ-ma Ch'ien means the Bactrian kingdom under the Greeks. According to Szŭ-ma Ch'ien, the country of Ta-hsia

[4] Yang, 1983*a*, pp. 232–3. Another book of the same content was published by the same author(Yang, 1983*b*, pp. 232–3).

had no big or powerful king but only small chiefs in a number of cities. If the country of Ta-hsia was the Bactrian kingdom, it must have been under a king who controlled the whole of Bactria. Szŭ-ma Ch'ien also states that the people of Ta-hsia were skilled traders, but their soldiers were weak in warfare and disliked battle, and, for these reasons,Ta-hsia was conquered by the Yüeh-chih. These statements are not applicable to the Greek kingdom of Bactria, whose soldiers seem to have been skilful in fighting. As 'Ta-hsia' is an exact transcription of 'Tochara' (which was the central part of the Bactrian kingdom), if the Yüeh-chih were the Tocharians, the conquest of Ta-hsia by the Yüeh-chih means the conquest of the country of Tochara by the Tocharians, which seems rather strange. The evidence of Szŭ-ma Ch'ien shows that Ta-hsia cannot be the Bactrian kingdom, but was the country of Tochara divided into several small political units at the time of the Yüeh-chih invasion. In other words the Gracco-Bactrian kingdom had already been destroyed or divided when the Yüeh-chih arrived. Therefore, there is no need to accept the identification of the Tocharas with the Yüeh-chih.

A third group of scholars maintain that the Yüeh-chih were the Kushans. As already mentioned, the Kushans were originally one of the five *yabghu* (governorships) established by the Yüeh-chih. This view therefore holds that the other four governorships were also of the same stock. It seems convincing when the word 'Kushan' is explained as a genitive plural form of the root '*Kuša*', which means 'Yüeh-chih'. But the statement in the *Han-shu* (Annals of the Former Han) about the establishment of the five tribal chiefs suggests that they were natives of Ta-hsia who were conquered by the Yüeh-chih.[5] Moreover, if the name '*Kušān*' is identical with 'Yüeh-chih', we wonder why the author of the *Han-shu* uses different Chinese characters with different sound values to represent the two names.

The Yüeh-chih and the Scythians

It seems most plausible to identify the Yüeh-chih with the Scythians – a solution that fits the situation of Central Asia in the third and second centuries B.C. better than any other theory. The name of Yüeh-chih in Archaic Chinese, '*zngǐ-wăt-t'ia'* the barbarian prototype of which might have been **Zguǰa*, can be considered as a transcription of the name of the Scythians. This suggestion was first made in 1935 by Haloun, who held that the Chinese knew the Tocharian people under the name of the Yüeh-chih or Scythians. It may also be proposed that the Yüeh-chih were not only called Scythians, but were Scythians themselves. According to Szŭ-ma Ch'ien, up to the beginning of the third century B.C., it was the Yüeh-chih and the Tung Hu, the two dominant powers in the Mongolian plain,

[5] Kuwabara, 1940, pp. 42–6.

who pressed the Hsiung-nu from the west and east respectively. At that time, the Hsiung-nu were a small community of tribes. Only when they were unified under the able leader Mao-tun could they push the Yüeh-chih further westwards and the Tung Hu eastwards. Mao-tun himself was taken as a hostage by the Yüeh-chih in his early days.

Mao-tun was inspired by the unification of China by the Emperor Ch'in Shih-huang-ti in 221 B.C.; the first blow of the Hsiung-nu against the Yüeh-chih was given about this time. It resulted in the withdrawal of the Yüeh-chih to the western part of Gansu Province. The Hsiung-nu were originally a pastoral people in the steppes north of the Yin-shan mountain range. Szŭ-ma Ch'ien states that the Yüeh-chih were the only people who pressed the Hsiung-nu from the west. This may mean that the Yüeh-chih were seeking to control the greater part of the Mongolian plain.

The Yüeh-chih Empire

About 204–200 B.C. Mao-tun conquered Mongolia and subjugated several peoples. In 176 B.C. he defeated the Yüeh-chih in the western part of Gansu Province. In his letter to the Han, Mao-tun said that the Hsiung-nu had destroyed the Yüeh-chih; and Lou-lan, Wu-sun, Hu-chieh and twenty-six other countries in the neighbourhood were subjugated to the Hsiung-nu. It is an exaggeration to say that they destroyed the Yüeh-chih, but it is clear that the Yüeh-chih were driven from the west of Gansu and probably moved from the north of the T'ien Shan mountains. What is important is that all these countries were subjugated as a result of the defeat of the Yüeh-chih, that is, they had been under the control of the Yüeh-chih up to that time.

Lou-lan, later called Shan-shan, is a country near Lop Nor in the eastern part of the Tarim basin. The Wu-sun were a pastoral people in the region of the River Ili and Lake Issîk-köl, north of the T'ien Shan mountains. The twenty-six other countries seem to have been small states in the Tarim basin, probably including Casia mentioned above. As regards Hu-chieh, no definite identification has been made. The late T. Fujita was of the opinion that it is identical with the Uighur of a later period.[6] According to the *Han-shu*, in the mid-first century B.C., five kings competed with each other for the leadership of the Hsiung-nu Empire, one of them named Hu-chieh-wang, or King of Hu-chieh, which lies to the west of the Hsiung-nu Empire. A few years later Chih-chih *shan-yü* became independent from the Hsiung-nu Empire, occupied the north-west part of the Mongolian plain and successfully defeated the army of the Wu-sun. Subsequently he marched northwards, subjugated the U-chieh, and, turning to the north, conquered the Ting-ling. The U-chieh are said to be

[6] *Tôzai Koshôshi no kenkyû, Saiiki-hsu* 1943, pp. 61, 64.

identical to the Hu-chieh. Taking these statements into consideration, the Hu-chieh may be placed in what is now Dzungaria or the upper waters of the River Selenga. Fujita's view, therefore, seems to be quite close to the truth.

The dominion of the Yüeh-chih also extended as far south as the upper waters of the Yellow River. Szŭ-ma Ch'ien states that a small part of the Yüeh-chih, who could not follow the migration of the main horde towards the west, settled themselves in Nan-shan, the southern mountains, which separate the upper waters of the Yellow River people from the Mongolian plain.

The date of migration of the Yüeh-chih to Ta-hsia is not clearly known. The Hsiung-nu gave a third blow to the Yüeh-chih during the reign of Lao-shang *shan-yü* (*c*. 174–161 B.C.). But it is generally believed that the conquest of Ta-hsia was made some time between 139 and 128 B.C., that is, between the departure of Chang Ch'ien and his arrival at the court of the Yüeh-chih. So it is not certain when the small part of the Yüeh-chih settled in Nan-shan, though it is quite likely that it was in 176 B.C. when the Yüeh-chih were forced to evacuate the western part of Gansu Province. In any case, it is generally understood that this small part of the Yüeh-chih asked the Ch'iang (or Tibetans on the upper waters of the Yellow River) for protection and whether they could stay with them. It may, however, be suggested that these Ch'iang people had been under the rule of the Yüeh-chih and that the small group of the Yüeh-chih who were later called the Little Yüeh-chih, to distinguish them from the Great Yüeh-chih (or Ta-Yüeh-chih) in Ta-hsia, were earlier rulers of these Ch'iang people. They never asked for protection, but actually lived with the Ch'iang who were their subjects.

When China was unified by Ch'in Shih-huang-ti, the upper waters of the Yellow River (modern Gansu Province) did not form part of the Chinese Empire, but were under the domination of the Yüeh-chih. According to the late S. Wada, the Yüeh-chih realm included the north-western Mongolian plain and the upper waters of the Yellow River.[7]

Szŭ-ma Ch'ien locates the original place of the Yüeh-chih between Tun-huang and Ch'i-lien, which is a mountain in the Nan-shan range. He believes that the Yüeh-chih migrated from this restricted locality into the country of Ta-hsia or Bactria (*Shih-chi* Book 123). Further, as pointed out earlier, the Yüeh-chih need not be looked upon as a small community of people located in a small area. They ruled the greater part of the Mongolian plain, possibly Dzungaria, the north of the T'ien Shan where the Wu-sun lived, countries in the Tarim basin and the upper waters of the Yellow River. Their principal territory may have been between Tun-huang and K'ang-chü, which were two of the most important places on

[7] Wada, 1939, pp. 236–7, 1942, p. 278; see also his personal remark to the author.

the so-called Silk Route, but we should not consider that this region was the only territory held by them.

The position of the Yüeh-chih as a predominant power in Central Asia, before being pressed by the Hsiung-nu, is also evident from the statement of Szŭ-ma Ch'ien. He records that the authority of the Yüeh-chih ruler was accepted by the countries in Central Asia. They provided free food to envoys moving through their territories, but messengers from China had to pay for their food as well as their horses. This was one of the reasons why the Emperor Wu-ti decided to send an expedition to the country of Ta-yüan (present-day Ferghana)[8]in order to demonstrate China's military superiority over the Central Asian countries. This could also mean that the countries between the Wu-sun and Parthia had been under the sway of the Yüeh-chih until they were displaced by the Hsiung-nu.

It may be suggested that the Yüeh-chih in the third century B.C. were similar to theT'u-chüeh (Türks) of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. in territory and power; and that the migration of the Yüeh-chih was not that of a group of people from one place to another, but a withdrawal from the eastern and northern frontiers of the Yüeh-chih Empire.

The Yüeh-chih and Pazîrîk

We know that southern Siberia, Mongolia and Middle Asia were in the sphere of theso-called Scythian civilization, and it is in southern Siberia that most archaeological sites of the Scythian period have been found, chiefly in the northern part of the Altai range. The tombs at Pazîrîk, excavated by Professor S. I. Rudenko, are very well known, and are dated between the fifth and third centuries B.C.[9] The third century B.C. coincides with the date when the Yüeh-chih were at the apex of their power, before they were challenged by the Hsiung-nu. The Altai region in fact was part of the Yüeh-chih Empire, and the sites at Pazîrîk should be related to the Yüeh-chih.

It is stated in the *Shih-chi* (Book 123), that, when Chang Ch'ien was captured by the Hsiung-nu on his way to the Ta-Yüeh-chih in about 129 B.C., he was told by Chün-ch'en *shan-yü*, the King of the Hsiung-nu at the time, that the Yüeh-chih were to the north of his domain and it was not possible for the Han to contact them without crossing his territory, which required his permission and approval. At that time, the authority of the *shan-yü* extended to the north of Tai and Yü-chung or, roughly speaking, the northern part of the province of Shan-hsi. Chang Ch'ien and his party were, however, captured near Lung-hsi (in Gansu Province), and it is not clear whether they were brought to the court of

[8] Pulleyblank, 1966, pp. 25 et seq.
[9] Potapov, 1953, p. 16; Kiselev, 1951, pp. 361–92, especially 391, cf. *MIA*1949, Vol. 9, p. 216; Rudenko, 1953, pp. 346 cf. seq.; cf. Rudenko, 1951, p. 90; Rice, 1957, p. 200.

the *shan-yü* or to the western part of the territory of the Hsiung-nu, where the *shan-yü* happened to be staying. In any case the region of Ili, where the Yüeh-chih are usually believed to have settled at that time, lies west of the place in which the *shan-yü* is supposed to have been. But if the *shan-yü* meant the direction of the Altai mountain range, this may be more likely than the Ili region. This could be supported by another reference from the *Han-shu* (Book 52) in which is recorded the controversy between Han An-kuo who opposed the expedition against the Hsiung-nu and Wang Hui who insisted on the necessity of it. The Emperor Wu-ti accepted Wang Hui's opinion and dispatched more than 300,000 troops to Ma-i in the present province of Shan-hsi. The expedition ended in failure, and Wang Hui committed suicide in 133 B.C. According to Wang Hui, if the expedition had succeeded, the Han would have been able to subjugate the Yüeh-chih in the north. Here, the Yüeh-chih are placed to the north of the Han a few years later than the departure of Chang Ch'ien to the Yüeh-chih. These examples show that the region of the Altai range is better suited than the Ili valley as the dwelling-place of the Yüeh-chih.

The ethnic identity of the Pazîrîk people is still to be established. It is not yet known if they were of the same stock as the Scythians in south Russia. But, in this connection, it may be pointed out that the so-called 'Detached Scythians' are described by Herodotus as having lived in the vicinity of the Altai region. Again according to Herodotus, these Detached Scythians were rebels against the Royal Scythians in south Russia, but they were of the same stock. One wonders if they were the Pazîrîk people and the ancestors of the Yüeh-chih.

The Yüeh-chih and the Detached Scythians

According to Herodotus, there was a great migration of peoples in the seventh century B.C., which resulted in the occupation of south Russia by the Scythians who had originally lived further east and were pushed westwards towards the Issedones. Could not the Detached Scythians be considered as those Scythians who did not move west with their main horde? It may be proposed that the Detached Scythians built up a large empire which included a greater part of the Mongolian plain, regions to the north of the T'ien Shan range, the Tarim basin and the upper waters of the Yellow River. They were known to the Chinese as the Yüeh-chih (i.e. Scythians). A portion of them migrated into – or removed their centre to – Middle Asia, while the rest were destroyed by the Hsiung-nu or stayed in Nan-shan with the Ch'iang.

If the Yüeh-chih were Scythians, then what was the relationship between them and the four peoples who are said to have come down from beyond the Jaxartes (the present Syr

Darya) to destroy the Bactrian kingdom? If the explanation given above is correct, the country of Ta-hsia, which was conquered by the Yüeh-chih, cannot have been the Bactrian kingdom, which had already been destroyed before the arrival of the Yüeh-chih. Therefore, the invasion of these four peoples must have taken place some time before the coming of the Yüeh-chih. In the third and second quarters of the second century B.C. the Greeks in Bactria were fighting with the Greeks in India as well as with the Iranians of Parthia. According to W. W. Tarn, Bactria was up to about 141 B.C. under the control of Heliocles, who is believed to be the last king of the Bactrian kingdom.[10] So the invasion may have taken place in that year or some time later and it must have been before the coming of the Yüeh-chih who occupied the Sogdiana-Bactria region between 136 and 129 (or 128) B.C. Strabo tells us that the Bactrian kingdom was destroyed by the Tocharians and three other peoples, and, according to Szŭ-ma Ch'ien, the country which the Yüeh-chih conquered was Ta-hsia. As 'Ta-hsia' is believed to be a transcription of 'Tochara', and if these two statements are accepted, it cannot have been the Yüch-chih who conquered the Bactrian kingdom.

The Yüeh-chih conquest of Bactria

In the history of Central Asia, the third and second centuries B.C. constituted a period in which the nomadic peoples inhabiting its northern and north-eastern borderlands made a great impact on the course of political events. The mid-third century B.C. saw the emergence of the Graeco-Bactrian and Parthian kingdoms. It was the period when Diodotus in Bactria and Andragoras in Parthia freed themselves from Seleucid rule. In Bactria this gave rise to the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, but events took a different course in Parthia, where the nomadic tribe of the Parni, under the leadership of Arsaces, overthrew Andragoras and laid the foundations of the Parthian kingdom (see Chapter 5). In his eastern campaign, the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III had besieged Bactra, the Graeco-Bactrian capital. The Graeco-Bactrian king, Euthydemus, offering peace on honourable terms, put forward a number of arguments that included the following (Polybius XI.34.5):

> If Antiochus does not accede to my request, the situation of both parties will become insecure. Huge hordes of nomads are massed on the border, posing a threat to both of us, and should the barbarians cross the border they will undoubtedly conquer the land.

Euthydemus suitably impressed the Seleucid ruler, peace was concluded, and the border between Graeco-Bactria and the nomadic tribes remained intact. The incident is most

[10] Tarn, 1938, pp. 272–3; Narain, 1962, p. 141.

significant because it clearly demonstrates the strong pressure exerted by the nomads on the political borders of the sedentary states in the late third century B.C.

Euthydemus' warning was to prove no hollow utterance, for events soon occurred which led to the downfall of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom and altered the entire political situation in Central Asia. These were triggered off by the conflict of two nomadic tribes, the Hsiung-nu and the Yüeh-chih. It is clear from Chinese sources that the Hsiung-nu ruler Mao-tun (206–174 B.C.) attacked the Yüeh-chih tribe, whose leader was killed in battle. The Yüeh-chih were forced to retreat westwards. The Hsiung-nu pursued them and the son of the Yüeh-chih leader was also killed in an encounter with them.[11] The movement of the Yüeh-chih set off a whole series of displacements of nomadic peoples in Central Asia. One such 'secondary' displacement caused by the movement of the Yüeh-chih is mentioned in Chinese sources. They moved into the Ili basin, from where they drove off the Sai (Archaic Chinese *Sək*) people; but the Yüeh-chih were in turn attacked by the Wu-sun and compelled to resume their westward migration.[12] The diversity of peoples involved in these migrations is also confirmed by ancient writers. The movement of the Yüeh-chih finally came to a halt in Bactria. Although the political events and migrations that led up to the nomadic conquest of Bactria remained unknown to Greek and Roman writers, the fact itself did not escape their attention. It is very significant that the classical writers in question mention the participation of several peoples in the conquest of Bactria. Describing the situation in the nomadic zone of Central Asia, Strabo enumerates the tribes that 'took Bactria from the Greeks': the Asioi, the Pasianoi, the Tocharoi and the Sacarauloi (Strabo XI.8.2). A little later he mentions the Sakai in connection with the conquest ofBactria (XI.8.4). In connection with this event, Pompeius Trogus (Trog. Comp., *Prolog*. XLI) speaks of the Scythian tribes of the Sacaraucae and the Asiani and subsequently (XLII) of the Asiani – 'kings of the Tochari' – and the Sacaraucae. Scholars have taken great pains to correlate Chinese and Greek ethnic names and determine the role of the various peoples in these movements. What remains apparently in dispute is identification of the Chinese Sai with the Greek Sakai and the Indian Sakas. More problematic, though highly plausible, is the identification of the Yüeh-chih with the Tochari.

During the eighties of the second century B.C. the migration of the Yüch-chih eventually displaced the Saka tribes of the eastern part of Central Asia. They migrated south and crossed the Pamirs, having touched on eastern Bactria. This stage in the migration of the Sakas was apparently completed in the early first century B.C.

[11] Bichurin, 1950, Vol. II, pp. 147, 151.
[12] Narain, 1962, pp. 133–5.

The Yüeh-chih proper, having drawn into their orbit a number of other nomadic peoples, passed through Ferghana (Ta-yüan) and reached the borders of Bactria. The completion of the first stage of their migration is recorded in the Chinese sources.[13] Chang Ch'ien, who had been sent by the Chinese to persuade the Yüeh-chih to join China in attacking the Hsiung-nu, stayed among them for some time during the period 130–125 B.C. The situation he recorded [14] was that the Great Yüeh-chih lived a nomadic life, ranging over the area immediately north of the Oxus river, while the country south of the Oxus (southern Bactria) was subordinated to the Great Yüeh-chih but retained its political autonomy, divided into a large number of city-states each with its own ruler. It can thus be supposed that at the time northern Bactria and Sogdiana were fully under the control of the Yüeh-chih while in southern Bactria towns persisted under the supreme suzerainty of the nomads.

The nomads and Parthia

Almost simultaneously the nomads began migrating westwards from Bactria and came into conflict with the Parthians. This clash sprang from a particular event. The Parthian king Phraates hired some nomads (Justin calls them Scythians) to do battle with the Seleucidking, Antiochus VII Sidetes. They arrived late when the Parthians had already routed the Seleucid forces and King Phraates refused to pay them the agreed sum. In retaliation, the nomads devastated the eastern half of Parthia. Phraates marched against them, with an army that included Greek soldiers who had been taken prisoner by the Parthians. In the heat of the battle against the nomads in 128 B.C., the Greeks went over to the enemy, the Parthian army was annihilated and Phraates was killed (Justin XLII.1.5). The nomad detachments then left Parthian territory. The new king, Artabanus (Phraates' uncle), tried to mount an offensive against them. It came to nothing, and in a battle with the Tochari (here Justin gives a precise ethnic name instead of his previous vague 'Scythians'), Artabanus was mortally wounded (Justin XLII.2.2), dying in 124 or 123 B.C.[15] His son Mithradates II succeeded to the Parthian throne and put a final stop to the nomad incursions. He waged many valiant wars against his neighbours and joined many peoples to the Parthian kingdom. He also several times vanquished the Scythians and avenged the wrongs done to his forebears (Justin, XLII.2.4–5).

By the turn of the first century B.C. the Saka tribes had settled in Gandhāra and the Great Yüeh-chih in northern Bactria. South Bactria, though still under the authority of minor Greek rulers, was also under the control of the Saka tribes; and on the eastern borders of

[13] Davidovich, 1976, pp. 56 et seq.
[14] Bichurin, 1950, Vol. II, p. 151; Pulleyblank, 1968; Zürcher, 1968.
[15] Debevoise, 1938, p. 38.

Parthia (Margiana, Aria and Drangiana) military operations were under way against them. Subsequent political developments involved a Parthian offensive to the east. This is the historical context that must be borne in mind for a proper understanding of Strabo's report that the Parthians also 'seized part of Bactria, having driven away the Scythians' (Strabo XI.9.2). The course of those wars is attested by three unique series of Parthian coins with the Greek inscription 'ΚΑΤΑ ΣΤΡΑΤΕΙΑ' (On campaign) and the name of three regions: Aria, Margiana and Traxiana. The dating of these coins has been disputed for many years. The most plausible view, however, seems to be that of David Sellwood, who attributes them to the seventies of the first century B.C. and to the mint of an unknown Parthian ruler.[16] It is reasonable to suppose that as a result of these campaigns, the Parthians gained control of Aria (Herat oasis), Margiana (Merv oasis) and possibly the area of Mashhad. Sellwood thinks that this was the region called Traxiana. The further conquests of the Parthians in the east are attested in Isidore of Charax's *Mansiones Parthicae*. After 'Areia' and the 'Anauōn chōra' (part of Aria), the author names the Parthian possessions Zarangiane, 'Sakastane Sakōn Skythōn' (Sakastan of the Saka Scythians) and Arachosia (Kandahar region).[17] In modern works it is thought that as a result of these military operations the Parthians halted the nomads, brought them under control and settled them on the land. After these events Drangiana was called Segistan, modern Sistan. The Sakas seem to have retained some form of their political organization under Parthian sovereignty while beyond the confines of Parthia there were some minor nomad possessions dependent on the Parthians; there is, for instance, numismatic evidence for a ruler Sapadbises.[18] Such was the situation of the advance of the nomads in the western zone at the turn of the Christian era.

Further east, in the central regions of Bactria, the situation is described in the Chinese chronicle, the *Han-shu*. It was already markedly different from that recorded by Chang Ch'ien.[19] The whole of southern Bactria had already been occupied by the Yüeh-chih, so that now the Great Yüeh-chih bordered on the south with the land of Chi-pin. The supreme leader of the Great Yüeh-chih had his residence in a town north of the Oxus river. The entire territory dependent on the Great Yüeh-chih was divided into five *hsi-hou*. The state of the Great Yüeh-chih represented a confederacy of five tribes. These were the five former territories for nomadism which had been transformed into five minor vassal states dependent on the central authority personified by the King of the Great Yüeh-chih. At the same time, it must be remembered that the state that had been formed was still very unstable and loose-knit.

16 Sellwood, 1980, pp. 97 et seq.
17 Sarianidi and Koshelenko, 1982, pp. 307 et seq.; Masson and Romodin, 1964, pp. 135 et seq.
18 Sarianidi and Koshelenko, 1982, pp. 310 et seq.
19 Davidovich, 1976, pp. 60 et seq.; Zürcher, 1968, pp. 367 et seq.

Archaeological remains of the nomads in northern Bactria

In northern Bactria the burial places investigated by Mandel'shtam at Tulkhar, Aruktau and Kokkum[20] are thought to be those of nomads who conquered Bactria. Material from the graves indicates that tribes of various origins took part in the conquest. Very significantly, the material culture suggests northern links, in particular with the Sarmatian tribes. This is borne out by evidence from nomadic graves in the Zerafshan valley in Sogdian territory.[21]

A very important point, deduced mainly from nomadic graves in Bactria, is that the graves are situated on the edge of the valleys and do not encroach on the irrigated and tilled areas. The very plausible suggestion has been made that the nomadic conquest left no havoc in its wake because the nomads did not destroy the irrigation systems and did not take up irrigated land for grazing. We can safely surmise that having moved into the conquered territories, they took over land not used by farmers, and preferred to exploit the subjugated population, leaving the existing economic structure intact.

A close link is to be noted between the nomads and the settled oases. The vast majority of ceramic vessels found in the nomad graves were made in craft workshops and came to the nomads from the oases. We do not of course know how this happened; perhaps the nomads received the manufactured items (including pottery) as tribute exacted from the farmers or acquired them through barter. The fact remains that very close ties existed between the nomads and the farmers.

The sensational discoveries of the Russian-Afghan expedition (led by V. I. Sarianidi) at the necropolis of the ancient town of Tillya-tepe in northern Afghanistan[22] have shed light on the upper social stratum in the period when state-like formations, headed by the descendants of leaders of the nomadic tribes, emerged in the conquered territories. The coins from Tillya-tepe enable it to be fairly accurately dated between the second half of the first century B.C. and the first half of the first century A.D.[23] Six excavated graves yielded some 20,000 objects made of precious metal (Fig. 1). The huge riches that accompanied the dead contrast with the more than modest sepulchral structures. It is particularly significant that there is no mark over the graves indicating a burial site. Sarianidi assumes that these were secret burials.

Archaeological evidence from the Pamirs and its comparison with other material confirm the evidence of written sources that in migrating to India the Sakas did pass through

20 Mandel'shtam, 1966, 1975.
21 Obel'chenko, 1974.
22 Sarianidi, 1984.
23 Sarianidi and Koshelenko, 1982.



FIG. 1. Gold necklace. Tillya-tepe. (Courtesy of V. Sarianidi.)

this mountain region. Another important point is the sharp decline in the population in the Pamirs in the subsequent period, doubtless due to the fact that the bulk of the population moved south.[24] Excavations at Ay Khanum have shown that the fall of the Graeco-Bactrian city was indeed the result of the nomadic conquest; the population that settled on its ruins was very different culturally from its predecessors. There is unfortunately very little archaeological material from the more southerly parts of the region to throw light on nomadic migration.

Indian historical tradition is of no help, since it merely brushes over these events.[25] There is also insufficient material to throw light on the history of the cities and inhabited rural localities in the region during this 'dark age'. No doubt a number of cities such as Ay Khanum perished in the course of the nomadic conquest. But it is equally clear that the nomads did not make a special effort to wreck the irrigation systems and the towns and villages. So far as we can judge, the nomads sought to exploit rather than destroy the existing economic structure.

Material from northern Bactria indicates that the nomadic conquest was soon followed by fresh material prosperity and, in particular, urban development. On archaeological

[24] Litvinsky, 1972.
[25] Sharma, 1980; Serditîkh, 1983, pp. 84–8.

evidence from the Surkhan Darya valley, V. M. Masson concluded that the rapid rise in the number of settlements there began in the first century B.C.[26] Yüeh-chih times saw the rise of what was later to become the major centre of Dalverzin-tepe, [27] as well as many smaller centres such as Zar-tepe. Furthermore, significant reconstruction operations at the ancient town site of Khalchayan[28] can be ascribed to the Yüeh-chih period; the renowned Sistan sanctuary of Kuh-i Khwaja also seem to have been rebuilt.[29] The most revealing material regarding the history of the Central Asian city in those ‘dark ages’ has been obtained, however, in the course of archaeological exploration at Taxila.[30]

The ‘dark ages’

The scarcity of sources makes it hard to trace political and social development in the countries of Central Asia during the so-called dark ages. It is clear from what has been said earlier that the states that were formed in the period of nomadic conquest were insufficiently stable, their frontiers were constantly changing, and some states were emerging as others declined. There was no clear-cut structure within the states. One reason for this was the character of statehood that emerged as a result of the nomadic conquests. The best-known instance was the state of the Yüeh-chih, which was divided into five *hsi-hou* (*yabghu*). It can be assumed that this division into five possessions represented a division of the territories for the nomadism of the five tribes that took part in the conquest of Bactria. It may be supposed that the situation was similar in other regions conquered by the nomads.

Another factor that weakened these new emergent states was the frequent co-existence of two political structures – an old one retained from earlier times and a new superimposed nomad structure. One example of this was the situation in Bactria during the first stage of the Yüeh-chih conquest, when the territories north of the Oxus were under the direct rule of the Great Yüeh-chih, while southern Bactria was divided between a number of minor rulers of individual cities.

An important role in the political structure of the new states was played by satraps, an institution inherited from the Achaemenids. However, at this time many satraps, while nominally plenipotentiaries of the central government, were in fact almost or fully independent rulers who founded dynasties of their own, and the title ‘satrap’ or ‘great satrap’

[26] Masson, 1974; Masson, 1976.
[27] *Dal’verzintepa,* 1978.
[28] Pugachenkova, 1966.
[29] Gullini, 1964.
[30] Marshall, 1951; Il’in, 1958.

was often the mark of an independent ruler. The nomadic conquest clearly had an effect on the development of social relations in the countries of the region.

A number of Indian works describing the calamities which befell the country in the 'Kali Age' include among these disasters the disruptions of the established social order, the flight and liberation of slaves, the increased wealth of the Śudras and the general weakening of caste (*varṇa*) stability. It is perhaps significant that the texts concerning these changes are usually set in the context of foreign conquest – Greek, Saka, Parthian and Kushan.[31]

Despite political instability, economic relations in the Saka-Parthian period developed very successfully. Busy sea-routes were opened up between Egypt and India, the first direct contacts between Egypt and India dating back to the late second century B.C. (apparently between 120 and 115). In about 100 B.C., Hippalus discovered the mechanism of the monsoon winds, and thereby made it possible for ships to sail regularly to and from the shores of India (*Periplus* 57). Trade between Egypt and India was most actively developed in the late first century B.C. When in the twenties of the first century B.C. Strabo journeyed in Egypt, he 'learnt that some 120 ships complete the voyage from the Straits of Hormuz to India' (Strabo II.5.12). He also observed in that connection that 'great fleets now set off as far as India' (Strabo XVII.1.13) and, further, that 'present-day merchants sailing from Egypt via the Nile and the Arabian Gulf to India . . . have been going as far as the Ganges' (Strabo XV.1.4). In the first century A.D. knowledge of the coasts of India and the ability to use the monsoon winds had attained such a standard that many new Indian peoples and cities were discovered, trading links were established with them, and ships from the ports of southern Arabia and the Horn of Africa went to particular ports of India with particular goods (Pliny, *Nat. Hist*. VI.101–6).[32] Large vessels carried a detachment of armed guards (Pliny, *Nat. Hist*. VI.101; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* III.31.1 c.). This was clearly why the rulers of Indian states permitted merchant ships to moor only in particular places (*Periplus* 52) and introduced a number of other limitations (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* III.35.1 c.). The Indian trade yielded huge profits for the merchants from Egypt since the goods were resold a hundred times dearer (Pliny, *Nat. Hist*. VI.101). The overall trade balance was negative for the Romans, who ruled Egypt from 30 B.C. Pliny wrote: 'India annually swallows up from our state no less than 55 million sesterces' (Pliny, *Nat. Hist*. VI.101). In the second half of the first century A.D. Indians were fairly frequent visitors to Egypt. On one occasion in the theatre of Alexandria in Egypt some time in the period A.D. 71–75, Dio Chrysostomus said (*Ad Alexandr*. 40):

[31] Yadava, 1978/79.

[32] Berzina, 1982, pp. 31 et seq.

> I see before me here not only Hellenes, Italics and even people from Hither Syria, Libya, Cilicia and distant Ethiopians and Arabs, but also Bactrians, Scythians, Persians and a number of Indians, all of whom customarily come together and form the audience here with you.

In the territory of India the Roman trading station at Arikamedu[33] was well known; and in Egyptian territory, in the 'White Haven', Indian ceramics and fragments of pottery with Tamil inscriptions in Brāhmī script have been found.[34]

Overland caravan trade was actively developed during this period. The 'royal way' passed through Parthian territory, starting from Zeugma on the Euphrates. It is described by Isidore of Charax. Cutting across Mesopotamia and passing through the territory of Iran it reached Merv. From there it turned south and led on through Aria, Drangiana and Segistan to Arachosia (in the Kandahar region), then through Ghazni to the Indian subcontinent. Another important branch of the highway ran from Merv to Amul on the Oxus and then to Samarkand, where it merged with the Silk Route from the oases of Tarim basin. The Chinese sought to establish permanent trade links with Parthia as early as the second century B.C. The official Chinese annals contain an account by Chang Ch'ien of his visit to Parthia, [35] from where he brought vines and alfalfa seeds to China. From the late second century B.C. the Silk Route functioned more or less regularly, passing through Central Asia and playing an important part in its economic ties. The Parthians protected trade along the route, deriving considerable profit from the payment of taxes, and did everything they could to prevent direct links between China and Rome since their intermediary role was extremely profitable.[36] The Parthians also carried on maritime trading with India via the Persian Gulf ports, notably Spasinu-Charax. There were north–south caravan routes from Bactria to India; and many routes via the Hindu Kush linked the northern and southern parts of Central Asia. Central Asia was thus provided with a network of maritime and overland routes, both international and local, which ensured the development of international and local trade. Control over the trade routes procured financial resources for the state treasury, and could be used as a political weapon. Thus, the Parthian government tried to ensure that caravans from Palmyra (a major centre of the caravan trade) went not to Seleucia on the Tigris, a city hardly notable for loyalty to the Arsacids, but to the cities more closely connected with the central authority, such as Ctesiphon, Vologaesocerta and Spasinu-Charax.[37]

[33] Wheeler et al., 1946.
[34] Whitkomb and Johnson, 1980.
[35] D'yakonov, 1961, p. 204.
[36] Colledge, 1967, p. 80.
[37] Koshelenko, 1971.

The expansion of international and domestic trade was obtained by means of a developed system of monetary circulation. Coins of many dynasties circulated in Central Asia and, with growing international trade and political upheavals, were often to be found far from the place of minting. Much of the money in circulation was accounted for by coins issued by the early Graeco-Bactrian kings. Minted from high-standard silver in accordance with the Attic system of weights and issued in large quantities, they remained in circulation for a number of centuries. Another major part of the total amount of money in circulation was constituted by the so-called Indo-Greek coins issued by the Graeco-Bactrian kings who had conquered part of India. Beginning with Demetrius, a number of these kings had possessions both north and south of the Hindu Kush, and some ruled solely in the territory of the Indian subcontinent. These coins usually followed the Old Indian system of weights. One side of the coin carried a Greek legend and usually a typically Greek portrait; the other side bore a reverse type with a Kharoṣṭhī legend. Also in circulation were coins of the last Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kings, issued when the bulk of the region was already under nomad control.

Very soon after reaching the settled oases of the region, the rulers of the nascent nomad states began issuing their own coinage. This was often dictated not by economic necessity but by the desire to proclaim to the world a new independent state. The first local coins in the region north of the Oxus were various types of imitations of Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian coins.[38] We know of coins modelled on the Seleucid drachms portraying Alexander (place of minting unknown); imitations of Antiochus I drachms (in the Zerafshan valley); imitations of tetradrachms of the Graeco-Bactrian king Euthydemus(western part of the Zerafshan valley); imitations of the tetradrachms of the Graeco-Bactrian king Eucratides (in Chorasmia or the middle valley of the Jaxartes); imitations of the obol of Eucratides (in the Kafirnigan basin); silver and subsequently bronze imitations of the tetradrachms and drachms of Heliocles. These stages in the development of coinage in that part of the region correspond to the second and first centuries B.C.

Subsequently coins of another type began to be minted on behalf of the new authorities. One of the most striking examples of these new coins are those of Heraus, who was evidently one of the predecessors of the Great Kushan kings. In Sogdiana, coins began to be minted in the first century A.D. depicting, on the reverse, a standing archer and, on the obverse, the profile of a king with the name 'Aštam'.

The period of the 'dark ages' was one of the most fruitful in the development of Central Asian art, when the previously rather isolated artistic schools came into close mutual contact. As the Greeks from Bactria campaigned and settled in India, they became

[38] Zeimal, 1978.

familiar with Indian art but they also brought with them forms of their known and customary art. In Bactria there was evidently little interaction between Greek and local art before the nomadic conquest. Greek art was that of the conquerors and was alien to the bulk of the population, who maintained their own traditions. Neither, on the other hand, did local art have any significant effect on the art of the Greeks. The nomadic invasion abruptly changed the situation. The social barriers dividing the world of the Greeks from that of the Bactrians were swept away, there being then no longer anything to prevent contact between the two artistic traditions. The nomads also brought with them their art, which spread in their wake in Bactria, Sogdiana and the Indian subcontinent. As the power of the Indo-Parthian rulers extended, so the Parthian art forms that had already taken shape at this time began to affect the artistic life of many parts of Central Asia. In a word, the ‘dark ages’ constituted a time of intense interaction between many trends in art.

This is most clearly seen in the works of decorative and applied art, found in theexcavations of the Tillya-tepe necropolis.[39] Among mass items brought to light, a number of distinct trends are clearly evident. The first thing that strikes the eye is the large quantity of works of clearly nomadic origin (scenes of animals seizing their prey are vigorous and expressive). There is undoubtedly a very close similarity between these works and those from the burial mounds of the Altai mountains. The genetic link between this category of work and the ‘Siberian animal style’ is beyond doubt. Another trend is represented by typically Greek objects connected with Hellenistic art traditions. Chinese items or items displaying Chinese influence occur in small quantities. Some works of art clearly reflect ancient Bactrian traditions in which Parthian influence makes itself felt. Finally, there are specimens representing a synthesis of various traditions.

In the case of Bactria, the best-known relic of monumental art of the period of the ‘dark ages’ is to be found at Khalchayan.[40] Pugachenkova regards the building in Khalchayan as a palace. A more plausible view, however, is that the palace in Khalchayan represents a temple of deified ancestors. The opinion is sometimes expressed that the Khalchayan palace must date from Kushan times, but this can hardly be so. The palace clearly dates from the ‘dark ages’ though the exact point has not yet been determined.[41] What arouses the greatest interest in Khalchayan is the relief compositions, including depictions of representatives of the local dynasty and a carved frieze of Dionysian character. The carving is in clay and has been thought to represent the dynasty of Heraus, but this is hard to accept when the possessions of Heraus very probably lay south of the Oxus.

[39] Sarianidi, 1984.
[40] Pugachenkova, 1966, 1971.
[41] Koshelenko, 1974.

8

THE SAKAS AND INDO-PARTHIANS*

B. N. Puri

Contents

THE term 'Saka' or 'Scythian' is given generally to the nomads who occupied the northern regions of Asia and Europe. The earliest references to them are in the *Historiae* of Herodotus (VII.64) and in the cuneiform inscriptions of Darius I, in a rather vague manner (see Chapter 2) denoting three different and widely separate tribes. The history of the Sakas[1] is closely linked with tribal movements from the neighbourhood of China (see Chapter 7). They were forced by the Yüeh-chih[2] to move south–west and occupied Bactria.

* See Map 3.

[1] For the history of the Sakas and their relations with contemporary tribes, see: Minns, 1913, 1908–25 (1961), 1925, p. 187; McGovern, 1939; Tarn, 1951; Rapson, 1922; Smith, 1907; Thomas, 1906; Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 1949; Puri, 1965; Majumdar, 1951; Konow, 1929; Nilakantha Sastri, 1957.

[2] On the Yüeh-chih, a comprehensive bibliography of the Chinese sources is given by Vallée Poussin, 1930, pp. 328 et seq. See also Konow, 1929, pp. liii et seq.; Puri, 1965, p. 9, n. 16. The principal Chinese texts supplying relevant information about these tribal movements are, according to chronological sequence, the *Shih-chi*, 123, of Szŭ-ma Ch'ien (*c.* 90 B.C.), containing the report of the Chinese ambassador Chang Ch'ien's visit (*c.* 126 B.C.) to the West; the *Han-Shu* of Pan Ku (*c.* A.D. 92), containing the annals of the Former Han dynasty covering the period from 206 B.C. to A.D. 24; and lastly, the *Hou Han-shu* of Fan Yeh, recording the annals of the Later Han dynasty, spreading over the period A.D. 25 to 220. See Pulleyblank, 1968; Narain, 1957, pp. 130 et seq.

Subsequently the Yüeh-chih put an end to Saka rule in Bactria, causing their ruler to flee to Chi–pin (Kāpiśa). The Indo-Greeks in Kabul impeded further Saka progress and compelled them to move westwards in the direction of Herat and thence to Sistan. This country was finally named Sakastan after them.[3] Parthia now acted as a barrier against any tribal movement from Upper Asia, and the stream of invasion was thus diverted into another channel, forcing the Sakas to move into the country of the lower Indus (Indo-Scythia).

The Sakas in India

The Saka invaders of the Indian subcontinent did not come through the Kabul valley.[4] Neither is there evidence that Begram was ever ruled by the Azes dynasty. [5] It has often been suggested that the Sakas could not have entered India from the north across the high mountain ranges of the Himalayas, Karakorum and the Pamirs, and that they must have reached India by the Bolan pass from Drangiana (modern Sistan) and Arachosia (Kandahar) over the Brahui mountains into the country of the lower Indus (Sind).[6] However, the major discoveries by A. H. Dani, following the construction of the Karakorum highway across the mountains from Pakistan to Chinese Turkestan, have brought to light important new evidence that requires a fundamental reappraisal of earlier theories. Dani has established the major routes used by the traders, soldiers and pilgrims who crossed the high Karakorum mountains in the early historical period and left large collections of Saka petroglyphs at the principal river crossings at Shatial, Chilas, Gilgit and Hunza. The petroglyphs at Chilas include drawings of Saka soldiers and horsemen as well as representations of stupas and the ibex.[7] The sacred rock of Hunza again has numerous mounted horsemen and ibex of the same period with a series of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions which include the names of Saka and Pahlava rulers.[8] It now seems clear that when Maues suddenly captured Taxila from the Indo-Greek king Apollodotus II, he must have used the north Karakorum route,[9] even if he were subsequently joined by other Sakas who entered the Indus valley from Sistan. Maues belongs to the early group of Saka rulers in the Indus valley who preceded the main dynasty of Azes I, whose era dates from 57 B.C. A date for Maues and the Saka invasion in the period 85–70 B.C. coincides with the indications from Parthian history that any

[3] Konow, 1929, pp. xvi et seq.; Narain, 1957, pp. 132-4; Puri, 1963.
[4] Rapson, 1922, pp. 563 et seq.; Konow, 1929, p. xxxi.
[5] MacDowall, 1985, pp. 555–66.
[6] Konow, 1929, p. xxxi.
[7] Dani, 1983, pp. 91–128.
[8] Dani, 1985, pp. 5–124.
[9] Bivar, 1984, pp. 5-15.

movement of the Sakas from Sistan to join the northern invaders should be some time after the death of Mithradates II in 88 B.C. [10]

In Sanskrit literature the Sakas belong to the north–west. The *Mahābhārata* (II.32.17) locates them with the Yavanas (Greeks) and Pahlavas (Indo–Parthians) in the far north-west beyond Sagala (modern Sialkot). The *Kālakācaryakathānaka*, a Jaina work of unknown date, [11] provides further information about the Saka dynasty in the Indus valley. The Jaina teacher Kālaka, whose sister had been abducted by Gardabhilla, King of Ujjain (ancient Ujjayinī), sought the help of the Saka King of Kings, who crossed the Indus by boat and proceeded to Kathiawar. In the autumn the Sakas attacked, took Gardabhilla prisoner and established a Saka as over-king (*rāyāhirāya*). After some time, Vikrameditya, the King of Malwa, ousted this Saka dynasty and established his own era, which came to be known as the Vikrama era of 58 B.C. Vikramāditya's dynasty was in turn uprooted by another Saka king, who founded an era of his own when 136 years of the Vikrama era had elapsed – the Saka era of A.D. 78.

The classical authors speak of the Sakas in north-western India as Indo-Scythians. Ptolemy (VII.1.55) states that all the country along the course of the Indus was called by the general name of Indo-Scythia. It included Patalene, Abiria and Surashtra. Dionysius Periegeta (V.1088) speaks of the southern Scythians as settled on the Indus and his commentator, Eustathius, says that these were the Indo-Scythians.

The Indus valley, particularly the Panjab, Swat and the foothills of Kashmir, is the area where the series of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of the Sakas[12] and coins of Maues and the kings of the Azes dynasty have been found.[13] Large numbers of copper coins of Maues and the Azes dynasty were found in the excavations at Taxila.[14]

MAUES

The earliest Saka ruler in the Indus region was Maues (Moga), who belongs to the first quarter of the first century B.C. The Taxila copper plate of Patika, which records the action of Patika, son of Liaka Kusuluka the satrap of Chukhsa, who established a Buddhist relic and a *saṃghārāma*, [15] is dated in the reign of the Great King, the Great Moga, in Year 78 of a Graeco-Bactrian era, probably of Eucratides (see Chapter 17). A defaced inscription from Maira in the Salt range, about 160 km south of Taxila and similar in palaeography,

[10] Debevoise, 1938; Sykes, 1922; Cameron, 1937; Ghirshman, 1961.
[11] Jacobi, 1880, pp. 247 et seq.
[12] Konow, 1929, pp. 11 et seq.
[13] Jenkins, 1955.
[14] Marshall, 1951.
[15] Konow, 1929, pp. 23–9.

seems to be dated Year 58 and to contain the word '*Moasa*'. Other inscriptions in the same era are known from Fatehang, 16 km south of Taxila, dated Year 68 and Shahdaur in the Agror valley perhaps dated Year 60. This leads Konow to suggest that the Indo-Scythian Empire in the Indus was established around 88 B.C., the period of the death of Mithradates II of Parthia. The coins of Maues are sometimes overstruck on, and in turn overstruck by, coins of the late Indo-Greek Apollodotus II, who seems to have been the immediate predecessor of Maues at Taxila.[16] Maues imitates Indo–Greek coin types such as those of Apollodotus II, his immediate predecessor, and Demetrius, who was probably the first Graeco–Bactrian king to rule the locality.[17] On his coins that copy the Elephant Head and Caduccus types of Demetrius, Maues is styled simply as '*Basileos Mauou*' in Greek alone, 'of King Maues'; subsequent issues follow the Indo–Greek practice, adding the equivalent titles '*mahārājasa Moasa*' in Kharoṣṭhī on the reverse; and two of his silver issues adopt a new and more elevated form of titulature, the Greek '*Basileos Basileon Megalou Mauou*', 'of the Great King of Kings Maues' with its corresponding Prakrit version in Kharoṣṭhī, '*rājatirājasa mahātasa Moasa*'. The higher title of 'Great King of Kings' is used regularly by his successors Azes I, Azilises and Azes II. From this numismatic data, it has been deduced that Maues was the earliest among the known Saka rulers of the Panjab, and that his coin types were continued by Azes II and Azilises, who also borrowed some other Indo-Greek types not copied by Maues.[18]

SUCCESSORS OF MAUES

The numismatic data[19] suggest an outline of the history of Maues' successors. It appears that Vonones, probably a younger contemporaray of Maues, was ruling in the eastern border country of Iran and Arachosia in association with his brother Śpalahora and his nephew Śpalagadama. Vonones' successors included Spalyrises (the Greek form of 'Śpalahora') with his son Śpalagadama. Then began the reign of Śpaliriśa, first as the 'brother of the king', then as the sole ruler, and lastly jointly with someone called Azes. During this period the Saka-Pahlava kingdom may have extended from Arachosia to the Paropamisadae (Kabul). The relationship between Maues and Azes I cannot be satisfactorily explained. It has been proposed by some scholars[20] that the two belonged to different racial stock. According to Konow,[21] Maues was a Saka and Azes a Pahlava who succeeded the Saka

16 Jenkins, 1955, pp. 1 et seq.
17 MacDowall, 1989, pp. 29–30.
18 Nilakantha Sastri, 1957, p. 198.
19 Whitehead, 1914, pp. 91 et seq.
20 Nilakantha Sastri, 1957, p. 207.
21 Konow, 1933, p. 24.

king Moga (Maues) in Taxila. Tarn, [22] however, thinks that Azes I was Śpaliriśa's son and both were of Saka race. Rapson[23] describes Maues, Azes I and Azilises as the first three Saka kings belonging to the same class and having close numismatic affinity.

THE DYNASTY OF AZES

The major Indo–Scythian dynasty ruled an empire based on the Panjab and Indus valley from *c*. 50 B.C. to A.D. 30. Numismatists have distinguished the existence of two kings called Azes.[24] The silver coins of Azes I have the obverse type of the king on horseback holding a couched spear while Azes II has the horseman holding an upright whip. Copper coins of Azes I are overstruck by Azilises, showing that Azes I preceded Azilises. Belonging to the Azes dynasty is a group of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions dated in the Old Saka era. Lohuizen–de Leeuw[25] relates the era to the Yüeh-chih conquest of Bactria in 129 B.C., but most scholars refer them to the Vikrama era of 58 B.C. The Taxila silver vase, referring to a 'Great Kushan King'[26] like the Shahdaur inscription, [27] has a number date with '*Ayasa*' that Marshall[28] interpreted as 'in the era of Azes'. The Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions published by Fussman, [29] which have dates '*Ayasa atidasa*' (of the deceased Azes) and '*Ayasa purvakalisa*' (of Azes of time past), now confirm Marshall's argument of an era founded by Azes I. It is, however, puzzling that Azes I should use an era established to mark the expulsion of the Sakas from Malwa; therefore it more probably refers to the accession date of Azes I about the same time, when the Saka Empire was consolidated and reformed on the Indus after Vikramāditya stemmed their further advance.

The coinage of Azes I was struck at three principal mints: at Puṣkalāvatī in Gandhara, at Taxila and in the middle Indus province, but not in Arachosia where finds rarely contain his coinage.[30] He retained the silver denominations and square coppers that the Indo–Greeks had used in the provinces, but used as his obverse type the Saka king on horseback, rather than a traditional royal portrait.

Azilises succeeded Azes I as King of Kings in the Indus provinces. Tarn[31] argues that Azes I associated Azilises with himself as co-ruler because of some joint coins struck in

[22] Tarn, 1951, p. 346, n. 3.
[23] Rapson, 1922.
[24] Jenkins, 1955, pp. 1 et seq.
[25] Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 1949, pp. 1–50.
[26] Konow, 1929, pp. 70–7.
[27] Ibid., pp. 16–17.
[28] Marshall, 1936, pp. 973 et seq.
[29] Fussman, 1980, pp. 1–43.
[30] Jenkins, 1955, pp. 1 et seq.
[31] Tarn, 1951, p. 348.

both names, but the supposed joint coinage is rare and may simply be the continued use of old dies after Azilises' accession. Azilises struck coins in the three mints used by Azes I. His silver tetradrachms have been found in hoards with those of the Indo–Greek king Hippostratus in north Pakistan and Kashmir[32] and with coins of Azes I, Azes II, Hermaeus and the Parthian king Orodes II (57–37 B.C.) in the hoard from Mohmand.[33] In Stupa IV at the Dharmarajika at Taxila, a Roman denarius of Augustus struck between 2 B.C. and A.D. 14 was found with a drachm of Azilises in a stupa deposit. The evidence of overstrikes and stratified finds at Taxila shows that Azilises succeeded Azes I and was followed by Azes II. He continued to use the Azes I obverse type showing the king with a couched lance, but subsequently adopted the new obverse type of the king holding a whip which was continued by his successor, Azes II.

Azes II succeeded as King of Kings in the Indus kingdom, and probably added Jalalabad and Gardez to his empire. Hoards of copper and silver coins of Azes II have been reported from Jalalabad and Gardez.[34] He used the Zeus Nikephorus reverse type for his silver issues from Taxila and the Pallas types for his mint in Gandhāra. At the end of his long rule there was a major debasement of the Saka silver coinage datable before A.D. 42.[35] Drachms of Azes II of the Zeus Nikephorus type, first in base silver and then in billon (a debased alloy of silver and copper in which silver constitutes only about 20 per cent), were struck in large numbers and are very common in finds from north Pakistan. At the same time the coinage is copied by a series of local satraps and *strategoi* – the satraps Jihoṇika (Zeionises) and Rājūvula and the *strategoi* Indravarma and Aśpavarma. Subsequently the Kushan king Kujula Kadphises copied some of the coin types of Azes II; and both their Indo-Parthian and Kushan successors continued to use the era of Azes for some time, no doubt because they wished to claim continuity with the Azes dynasty.

The Pahlavas in India

The dynasty that reunited the fragmented empire of Azes II was the Pahlava or Indo-Parthian kingdom of Gondophares. The various forms in which the name of this ruler appears on the coins are merely attempts to render in Greek the outcome of the Old Persian title '*Vindafarnah*' (the winner of glory).[36] Most of Gondophares' coins in the Indus valley struck in billon retained the obverse type of the tetradrachms of Azes II of a horseman

[32] Whitehead, 1923, p. 338.
[33] Jenkins, 1955, pp. 23–5.
[34] MacDowall, 1973, p. 212.
[35] Ibid., p. 228.
[36] Rapson, 1922, p. 577.

holding a whip, adding a characteristic tamgha – the Gondopharan symbol. The Takht-i Bahi inscription of Gondophares is dated in Year 103 and the twenty-sixth year of his reign, fixing his accession in or about A.D. 20 and giving him a long rule up to A.D. 46 or later.[37] This context is consistent with the legend associated with St Thomas in the *Apocryphal Acts of Thomas,*[38] which mention King Gundaphar and his brother Gad in connection with Thomas' enforced stay at his court. The death of the king's brother, his restoration to life and finally their conversion were instrumental in making Gondophares known to the Western world.

Philostratus (*Life of Apollonius of Tyana II*, p. 20 et seq.) writing around A.D. 217 describes Apollonius' visit to Taxila in A.D. 43–44, which should be within the period when Gondophares was King of Kings in the Indus provinces. The King of Taxila had a Parthian name, Phraotes, and was independent of Vardanes, the King of Kings of Parthia. He was powerful enough to exercise suzerain powers over the satrap of the Indus (Gandhāra), who was also not subject to the Parthian King of Kings. The king spoke Greek well and discussed philosophy. The king comments that he shares his wealth with his enemies:

> The barbarians were perpetually making raids into my territories, but I keep them quiet and control them with money so that my country is patrolled by them and instead of invading my dominions they themselves keep off the barbarians on the other side of the country.

The reconstruction of the political history of the Indo-Parthian dynasty of Gondophares depends almost entirely on numismatic evidence and the way in which the coin series of the dynasty are arranged. In some cases inscriptions on the coins give a statement of relationship to a predecessor, presumably to stake a claim to legitimacy. Whether such titles indicate a blood relationship or simply honorific titulature does not greatly matter, because they should indicate the sequence of rulers. Rapson[39] suggested that Gondophares immediately followed Azes II because both rulers were associated with the same *strategos* Aśpavarma, son of the *strategos* Indravarma. But the coins of Aśpavarma are not contemporary issues of Azes II. They seem to be copying the types of Azes II including the Greek legend of Azes II after the great debasement, when local rulers and officials asserted their independence; and the supposed joint issues of Aspavarma and Gondophares are in fact coins that have the titles of Aspavarma alone on both obverse and reverse with an additional symbol, which has been called the Gondopharan symbol because it is also found on

[37] For his inscription from Taxila dated Year 103, see Konow, 1929, pp. 57 et seq., and also Introduction, p. xlviii; his coins are recorded by Whitehead, 1914, Vol. I, Plate XV. For reference to Gondophares in the legend of St Thomas, see Smith, 1924, pp. 245 et seq. A comprehensive bibliography on this subject is provided by Vallée Poussin, 1930, p. 277.
[38] James, 1924, pp. 373–5.
[39] Rapson, 1922, p. 590.

billon tetradrachms of Gondophares and his successors in the Indus provinces. Major new discoveries of Indo-Parthian coins and fresh studies based on them have made it necessary to revise substantially the reconstruction of Indo-Parthian history that Rapson suggested some seventy years ago.

Marshall[40] found in excavations at Taxila a hoard of base silver drachms of the later Indo-Parthian kings, Sasan, Sapedana and Satavastra. A further specimen was found at Saudpur in Sind.[41] This series with the reverse type of Nike (Victory) holding a wreath can be attributed to the province of Sind. The excavations at Taxila[42] yielded substantial numbers of billon Indo-Parthian tetra drachms with the mounted-king obverse – the currency of the upper Indus provinces, Taxila and Gandhāra – of Gondophares, Abdagases (the nephew of Gondophares) and Sasan, who is sometimes given the double name of 'Guduphara Sasa' in his Kharoṣṭhī legends. Simonetta[43] analysed the Indo-Parthian silver drachms of Parthian type - the currency of Aria and Sistan – and published a sequence of kings, Orthagnes, Gondophares Autokrator, Abdagases, Pakores and Sanabares, followed by cruder drachms struck in copper in the names of a later Sanabares and a later Gondophares. To this series Alram[44] has added new types of a Gondophares, surnamed Sae, and of Ubuzanes the son of Orthagnes. MacDowall[45] has shown that the Nike-type copper tetradrachms of the Indo-Parthians were the currency of Arachosia and Sistan, and that the sequence of Gondophares Soter, Abdagases, Orthagnes, Pakores, a second Gondophares styled Megas, Sarpedanes and Satavastra was followed by Ardamitra who introduced the new reverse type of an early Sasanian fire altar. This series was clearly the coinage of the later Indo-Parthians in Arachosia and Sistan, the types found in the British excavations at Kandahar from which Kushan coppers are conspicuously absent.[46] Cribb[47] has published new types of billon drachms copied from debased issues of Strato II and Rājūvula with a crude thundering Pallas reverse for kings Gondophares, Abdagases, Sases, Ubuzanes and Sarpedanes. Sases, Ubuzanes and Sarpedanes also have the second name 'Guduvhara' suggesting that this title 'winner of glory', used as a personal name by the founder of the dynasty, became a family name and title for some of the later Indo-Parthians.

The presence of overstrikes provides useful confirmatory evidence. Copper imitation tetradrachms of Hermaeus, struck in his name long after his death, are overstruck by

[40] Marshall, 1936, pp. 27–46.
[41] Ibid., p. 95.
[42] Marshall, 1951, Vol. I, pp. 751–842.
[43] Simonetta, 1957, pp. 44–64.
[44] Alram, 1983, pp. 69–74.
[45] MacDowall, 1965, pp. 137–48.
[46] Helms, 1982, p. 9.
[47] Cribb, 1985, pp. 282–300.

Arachosian Nike tetradrachms of Gondophares, which are in turn overstruck by Kujula Kadphises and by Jihoṇika.[48]

The nameless king Soter Megas copies the local-type billon tetradrachms of Sasan in Gandhāra, [49] and copper didrachms of the nameless king (presumably the later stages of the long reign of Kujula Kadphises) are overstruck by Pakores.[50]

The full picture of Indo-Parthian political history must await the detailed numismatic study of each of these Indo-Parthian coin sequences and of their interrelationships with the rulers who preceded and followed them. In the meantime we can see that there were separate Indo-Parthian currencies in Aria /Sistan, Arachosia, the Indus valley provinces, Sind and the east Panjab, each with distinctive obverse and reverse types. We see the emergence of Gondophares, 'the winner of glory' and founder of the dynasty in the Indus provinces, Kapisene and east Panjab. His immediate successors Abdagases and Sasan lost Kapisene to Kujula Kadphises but retained the Indus provinces, Arachosia and east Panjab, and Sasan controlled Sind. In the latter half of the first century A.D. later Indo-Parthian rulers continued to hold Arachosia, Drangiana and Aria up to the Sasanian conquest. Even after they had lost Gandhāra and Taxila, later Indo-Parthian rulers are to be found in east Panjab and Sind. The *Periplus* (Chapter 38), probably dated towards the end of the first century A.D., says that the provinces of the lower Indus, still called Scythia, were ruled by Parthians who were continually expelling each other. There is no doubt that this feuding and civil warfare makes the sequence of rulers here so complex.

At its height the empire of Gondophares covered substantially more territory than the Indo-Scythian dynasty of the House of Azes had done, extending from Aria and Sistan in the west to Mathura in the east and including Kabul and Begram in the north and Kandahar and the mouth of the Indus in the south.

The administrative system of the Sakas and Pahlavas[51]

The coins of the Sakas from the time of Maues show that their rulers did not use the simple titles of '*Basileus*' and '*mahārāja*' (king) but assumed the grander titulature of '*Basileus Basileon*' and '*mahārāja rājatirāja*' (King of Kings). The use of these higher titles seems

[48] Mitchiner, 1976, p. 734.
[49] MacDowall, 1968, pp. 29 et seq.
[50] Simonetta, 1957, pp. 53–9.
[51] The study of the administrative system of the Sakas and Parthians is covered in a wider perspective in Puri, 1968*a*, Vol. I, Chapter IV, pp. 85 et seq.; see also Nilakantha Sastri, 1957, pp. 218 et seq.; Rapson, 1922, pp. 574–5.

to have been copied from the usage of contemporary rulers of Parthia, where the title '*Basileus Basileon*' had been introduced by Mithradates II about 123–88 B.C., [52] and was regularly used on drachms and tetradrachms from the time of Mithradates III, 57–54 B.C., and Orodes II, 57–38 B.C.[53] The title had some substance in the Indus provinces, because the Sakas, like the Pahlavas, seem to have left local hereditary monarchs in office, who acknowledged their suzerainty and acted as local rulers, such as Viṣṇuvarma, King of Apraca (Bajaur), the father of Indravarma, who dedicated a reliquary in Year 63 *Ayasa* (A.D. 6), [54] and Ajitasena, King of Odi, who also dedicated a reliquary.[55]

At several stages the coins seem to show a system of joint rule, where a senior king has a junior colleague who was intended to succeed his senior partner after death. The fully developed system is seen in the succession of *kṣatrapas* and *mahākṣatrapas* among the Saka rulers in Mathura and western India (see below). The concept of *dvairājya* (double kingship) was known to Indian political thinkers.[56] It seems to have been based on political requirements to contain disruptive forces near the throne. It is usually thought to be indicated by the joint coins of Vonones with Śpalahora, Vonones with Śpalagadama, Śpaliriśa with Śpalagadama, Spalyrises with Azes, and Azes with Azilises. In the Pahlava dynasty of the House of Gondophares it was thought that there were joint coinages of Gondophares and Gadana, Orthagnes and Gondophares Gadana, Gondophares and Sasan;[57] but it now seems that 'Gondophares' and 'Gudaphara' were 'winner of glory' titles, which became a sort of family name for many subsequent members of the family. There can be no doubt that the supposed joint coinage of Hermaeus with Kujula Kadphises and of Azes II with Aśpavarma are essentially coinages of Kujula Kadphises copying the types of Hermaeus and Aśpavarma copying the types of Azes II after a major debasement of the denomination.

Major districts of the empire were governed by *kṣatrapas* (satraps) and *mahākṣatrapas* a system dating back to the time of the Achaemenids. 'Satrap' is the Hellenistic variant of the Old Persian '*xšaçapavan*' (protector of the realm). These provincial governors were men of standing and position, appointed by the 'Great King' to maintain law and order in their territory. They owed allegiance to the supreme monarch, but were otherwise for practical purposes independent. The weakness of central control over the satraps encouraged centrifugal tendencies and the strife between the satraps appointed by Alexander was largely responsible for the breakup of his empire under his successors. The Indo-Greeks

[52] Sellwood, 1980, pp. 70 et seq.
[53] Ibid., pp. 110 et seq.
[54] Fussman, 1980, pp. 2 et seq.
[55] Fussman, 1986, pp. 1 et seq.
[56] Puri, 1968*a*, p. 89.
[57] Mitchiner, 1976, pp. 740 et seq., 755 et seq.

retained the system of government through subordinate and associated kings. The system of government through satraps continued under the Saka-Pahlava rulers.[58] In the Taxila copper plate inscription of Year 78, Liaka Kusulaka was satrap of Chukhsa, the great plain of Chach.[59] Kusulaka Patika was *mahākṣatrapa* in the Mathura lion capital inscription.[60] Early in the first century A.D., in Year 191 of the Graeco-Bactrian era (*c.* A.D. 30), Jihoṇika, son of Manigula, was satrap of Chukhsa[61] and issued a series of base-silver tetradrachms and copper coins in his own name,[62] when he seized independence at the end of the reign of Azes II. From Jalalabad in Afghanistan an inscription of Year 83 (A.D. 25) refers to a satrap, Tiravharṇa, who must have been an early Indo-Parthian satrap under Gondophares.

From the Panjab the satrap Kharahostes is known from the copper coins he issued early in the first century A.D.[63] The coin inscriptions describe him as the son of Arta, and he is identified by most scholars with the Yuvaraja (heir apparent) Kharaosta of the Mathura lion capital inscription,[64] whose daughter Ayasia Kamuia was the Chief Queen of Rajula (i.e. Rājūvula). A seal inscription of Sivasena shows him as satrap of Abhisāra, which has been identified with the hill country between the Jhelum and Chenab.[65]

The titles of '*kṣatrapa*' and '*mahākṣatrapa*' were regularly used by the Saka rulers of Mathura in the first centuries B.C./A.D. Coins are known for the earlier group of Saka rulers, the *kṣatrapas* Śivaghoṣa, Śivadatta, Hagāmaṣa and Hagāna.[66] In the later group, coins are known for Rājūvula as *kṣatrapa* and *mahākṣatrapa* for his son Śodāsa as *kṣatrapa* and *mahakṣatrapa* and for another *kṣatrapa* [Tora]nadasa.[67] The Mathura lion capital inscription[68] records the religious gift of the *kṣatrapa* Śodāsa, son of the *mahākṣatrapa* Rājūvula, and is in honour of the *mahākṣatrapa* Kusuluka Patika and the *kṣatrapa* Mevaki Miyika in honour of the whole of Sakastan. Śodāsa subsequently became *mahākṣatrapa* as we can see from four inscriptions that record religious benefactions, one of them dated to Year 42 (A.D. 72).[69] At this stage the *mahākṣatrapa* was assisted by a satrap who eventually succeeded him.

58 Valléc Poussin, 1930, pp. 268 et seq.
59 Konow, 1929, pp. 23–9.
60 Ibid., pp. 30–49.
61 Ibid., pp. 81–3.
62 Whitehead, 1914, pp. 157 et seq.; MacDowall, 1973, pp. 215–30.
63 Whitehead, 1914, p. 149.
64 Konow, 1929, p. 46.
65 Ibid., p. 103.
66 Allan, 1936, pp. cxi et seq., 185 et seq.
67 Ibid., pp. cxii et seq., 185 et seq.
68 Konow, 1929, pp. 30–49.
69 Rosenfield, 1967, p. 264.

The rulers of the western group of Sakas in Malwa and Kathiawar also used the titles '*kṣatrapa*' and '*mahākṣatrapa*'. The inscriptions of Nahapana from Nasik, Karle and Junnar dated Years 41 to 46 (probably A.D. 120–25) show him first as *kṣatrapa* and then as *mahākṣatrapa* while his coins refer to him as *rajño* and *Basileus* (king).[70] In the Girnar inscription Rudradāman claims that he himself acquired the title '*mahākṣatrapa*' by virtue of his conquests.[71] After the dynasty of the Western Satraps became firmly established, the long series of their coins dated in the Saka era of A.D. 78 shows a *mahākṣatrapa* and *kṣatrapa* ruling together, the *kṣatrapa* occupying the role of heir apparent and in due course succeeding to the office of *mahākṣatrapa*, as we saw earlier at Mathura. By the second and third centuries A.D these *mahākṣatrapas* seem to have been independent rulers. [72]

The *strategos* (general or military governor) is another official in the Saka administration, and the office seems to have been hereditary in some cases. At the end of the reign of Azes II coins are struck by Indravarma Apraca Raja and his son the *strategos* Aśpavarma, probably as an independent ruler.[73] Rapson[74] thought that this Greek title '*strategos*', which is equivalent to the Indian '*senapati*' (lord of the army), was inherited by the Sakas and Pahlavas from the Indo-Greeks. But Tarn[75] points out that Indian satrapies governed by generals (*strategoi*) simply reflected the continuation of Seleucid practice that one would expect in a successor state.

At a lower level, administration was conducted by a *meridarchos* (district officer). Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions record a *meridarchos* Theodorus on a Swat relic vase and an unknown *meridarchos* from a copper plate inscription from Shapur near Taxila, [76] both apparently of the Greek period.

Philhellenism

The Sakas in India, especially the Indo-Scythians under Maues and the House of Azes in the Indus valley, progressively occupied provinces that had been ruled by the Indo-Greeks since the time of Menander. They inherited and continued to use the Greek political

[70] Rapson, 1908, pp. lvi et seq., pp. 65 et seq.
[71] Kielhorn, 1905/06, pp. 36 et seq.
[72] For the history of the Saka *kṣatrapas* of western India, see Rapson, 1908, Introduction; also Rapson, 1922, p. 577. See also: Nilakantha Sastri, 1957, Chapter IX; Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 130 et seq. A summary of the records dealing with the history of the Sakas and their relations with comptemporary powers is given by Rapson, 1908, pp. lvi et seq., Nos. 31–7, covering the inscriptions of the Kṣaharāta dynasty, and Nos. 38–42, covering with those of the Western Satraps of Caṣṭana's family.
[73] Mitchiner, 1976, pp. 601 et seq.
[74] Rapson, 1922, p. 577.
[75] Tarn, 1951, p. 241.
[76] Konow, 1929, pp. 2–5.

institutions and culture that they found. They retained the Greek provinces and the Greek system of administration, even retaining the Greek names for officers such as '*strategos*' and '*meridarchos*'. In town planning they retained the Greek chessboard form of town plan at Sirkap (Taxila). Their buildings, such as the Saka temple at Jandial, were Greek in plan and decoration. Greek had ousted Mauryan art at Taxila, but it had become increasingly moribund. Removed from cultural contact with the West, it became increasingly Indianized under the Sakas. The process is seen in the stupa of the double-headed eagle in Sirkap, where some niches still have the pedimented front of a Greek temple but others have ogee Indian arches and the form of Indian toraṇas. Toilet trays under the Sakas retain the stones the Greeks had employed and copy Greek models but progressively introduce Indian motifs like the lotus into their background designs.

Parthia proper[77] was a Seleucid successor state (see Chapter 5) and the Pahlavas who succeeded the Sakas in the Indus provinces brought with them important Hellenistic elements that were valued in Parthia proper. At home, the Parthians also retained established Greek cultural traditions and institutions inherited from the Seleucids. Although the sizeable concentrations of Greeks and Hellenized peoples had lost the privileged position they had once enjoyed, Greek remained the *lingua franca* for commerce in Western Asia. Greek speech and culture were appreciated by the educated Parthians. Orodes spoke good Greek and Greek tragedies were played at his court, as Plutarch relates. Among their titles such as '*Dikaios*' (the just) and '*Euergetes*' (the benefactor) Parthian kings used the title '*Philhellenos*' (lover of Greek culture) on their coins, occasionally from the time of Mithradates I and regularly from the middle of the first century B.C. When the Indo-Parthians came to control the empire of Azes II in the first decades of the first century A.D., the Indus provinces saw a renaissance of Philhellenism, drawing on fresh Western sources, which brought a new and strong Hellenistic influence on the coinage, art and architecture of the empire of Gondophares, which can be seen so clearly in the Pahlava period of the excavations at Sirkap (Taxila).[78]

[77] The history of Parthia is recorded by: Debevoise, 1938; Tarn, 1930; Ghirshman, 1961; Lozinski, 1959; Huart, 1927.

[78] Marshall, 1951, Vol. I.

The monetary system and coinage[79]

The Sakas retained the monetary system of their immediate predecessors, the Indo-Greek kings such as Apollodotus II, with the standard denominations of the silver tetradrachms and drachms struck to the Indian weight standard, with copper coins providing the smaller denominations. The high purity of the silver remained unchanged until the end of the issues struck in the reign of Azes II, when the coinage suffered a great debasement.[80] The obverse and reverse types of the silver tetradrachms remained the same, but the denominations were struck in billon – a debased alloy of silver and copper in which silver forms around 20 per cent only. There was a corresponding deterioration in the design of the coinage and production of the copper denominations proper was suspended. Marshall attributes this sudden change to the introduction of lead and billon currency by Rājūvula and expansion of trade with the Andhra Empire, which had coins of those base metals; but the debasement coincided with the breakup of the Azes dynasty's empire. It seems more likely that the dynasty suffered an economic collapse and was deprived of access to its sources of silver, either from Panjshir or the Arvelli mines. The coinage of succeeding rulers in Taxila and Gandhāra – the dynasty of the general Aśpavarma and the House of Gondophares – was also struck in billon. There seems to have been a comparable debasement in the silver coinage of Arachosia and the Paropamisadae, where the silver tetradrachms of the successors of Hermaeus were struck thereafter with the same types in copper, and the denominations continued in this form under Gondophares and his Kushan successors; and in east Panjab, where the silver drachms of the later Stratos and Rajuvula are succeeded by billon drachms with the same types, the denominations struck by the Gondophares dynasty were struck in the same debased metal in this province, too. Only in the silver drachms of Aria and Sistan modelled on the Parthian coinage and in the provinces of the lower Indus, notably Sind, did the Pahlavas have a silver coinage.

The mints and engravers of the Indo-Greeks remained at the service of the new Saka rulers – Maues and the House of Azes – and they continued to use a wide range of reverse types as their Indo-Greek predecessors had done. They retained unchanged the bilingual character of the coinage of Gandhara and Taxila with the titulature of the king in Greek on the obverse and in Kharoṣṣhi on the reverse of each issue. But the Sakas made two major changes. Instead of the Indo-Greek title of 'king' they styled the Saka rulers who struck coins 'Great King of Kings' – *Basileus Basileon Megas* in Greek and *rajātirāja mahāta*

[79] A study of Saka and Indo-Parthian coins has engaged the attention of many scholars and numismatists: see Gardner, 1886; Whitehead, 1914; Jenkins, 1955; Narain, 1957. A good summary is provided in Rapson, 1922, pp. 586 et seq., as also in Nilakantha Sastri, 1957, Vol. II, pp. 197 et seq.

[80] Marshall, 1951, Vol. l, pp. 53 et seq.

in Kharoṣṭhi. Maues no longer used the obverse type of the king's portrait on the silver denominations, the normal Indo-Greek practice; and Azes I introduced a new convention, the obverse type of the Saka king on horseback on the silver denominations of tetradrachm and drachm.

The Pahlava rulers who succeeded the Sakas in the Indus provinces copied these new conventions. In other territories they retained the pattern of the coinages they found already current. In east Panjab, Gondophares and his successors copied the billon drachms of Rājūvula, with a stylized obverse portrait and a crude representation of a thundering Pallas on the reverse. In Arachosia, Gondophares and his successors issued copper tetradrachms with a distinctive obverse portrait as the copper tetradrachms of Hermaeus had done, substituting a new reverse type of Nike appropriate to the new conqueror. In Aria and Drangiana, Gondophares and his successors issued Parthian-type silver drachms retaining the obverse portrait and reverse type of the seated king that characterized the silver drachms of the kings of Parthia.

Architecture and art[81]

The Sakas at Taxila[82] followed Greek ideas in town planning, copied Greek prototypes in their architecture and were inspired by Greek forms in minor arts and crafts. Among Saka buildings at Taxila the temple at Jandial has a typical Greek plan with classical moulding and Ionic columns. Greek in concept are the small stupas dated by coins to the period of Azes I and II. Marshall's analysis shows that the Sakas initially used Greek ornamental features only, and at Jandial a plan typical of a Greek temple in mainland Greece with basically the same methods of construction and mouldings; and stupa decoration used classical acanthus leaves. Subsequently Indian influence becomes increasingly noticeable, and there is a mingling of Greek and Indian motifs. The stupa of the double-headed eagle has Corinthian pilasters and niches of three types – two with the pediment characteristic of Greek buildings, some with Indian ogee arches and others in the form of early Indian toraṇas. Marshall sees the same creeping Indianization in the minor arts. For example, the stone toilet trays retain Greek models, but introduce Indian motifs. Cut off from the Greek world by hostile Parthia, new inspiration only came from the Indian art centre of Mathura.

[81] For a study of art under the Sakas and the Parthians, see Marshall, 1936, 1951, 1960; Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 1949; Rosenfield, 1967; Rowland, 1953. The finds in Taxila at the Saka-Parthian levels provide an index to the material culture during this period. The classical accounts – Greek and Roman – noticing trade contacts between India and the Western world are helpful by recording items of import and export. See Marshall, 1951; Warmington, 1928. See also Nilakantha Sastri, 1957, pp. 220–1.
[82] Marshall, 1951, Vol. I.

In the early years of the first century A.D., about the time of the Pahlava conquest by Gondophares, Taxila suffered a great earthquake. When the city was rebuilt, new building methods were introduced, including a strong form of diaper masonry that was much more durable than the early rubble construction. Buildings were reduced in height, and houses were limited to two storeys, the lower one in the form of a basement. The legend of St Thomas, skilled in architecture and all types of work in wood and stone, being sold in Syria to a merchant called Habban and being brought to the court of Gondophares, is set against the background of skilled craftsmen from Western Asia being commissioned to do work for the Pahlavas.

A favourite theme in secular art was the drinking scene adopted for the decoration of Buddhist stupas such as the drinking party of nine figures, probably from Swat, of purely Hellenistic character.[83] The men wear either a short Greek chiton or a simple himation; the women a long chiton and himation. The man in the centre holds a metal tankard, while others hold goblets of a distinctive type with horizontal flutings and a disproportionately small base of the kind found in Pahlava levels at Taxila. Other reliefs now in the Peshawar Museum[84] retain Hellenistic characteristics; the form and posture of the figures are Greek rather than local, though they wear local dress and all carry lotuses, while a Corinthian pilaster frames the group on each side.

The rebuilt Pahlava city of Taxila produced a rich range of finds, particularly gold jewellery, silver plate and bronze vessels, probably buried when the city was under immediate threat from the Kushans. Objects found among the debris of buildings destroyed at this time include ornaments of personal use, household utensils, implements and arms, many of strongly Hellenistic character. Some objects seem to have been imported from the West such as a head of Dionysus in silver repoussé, a cast bronze statuette of the Egyptian child-god, Harpocrates, and a buff-coloured terracotta female head with delicate and sensitive modelling, all very fine specimens of Hellenistic art.[85]

The Pahlava conquest of Taxila clearly led to a major influx of articles from the Graeco-Roman world, and to encouragement being given to artists and craftsmen to imitate Western models. The reopening of trade routes across Parthia and the development of sea routes to the lower Indus facilitated this process, but the revival of Hellenism generally came with the Pahlavas.[86]

[83] Marshall, 1960, p. 33.
[84] Marshall, 1960, pp. 34–6.
[85] Ibid., pp. 26–7.
[86] Marshall, 1951, Vol. I, pp. 65–6.

Religious developments[87]

Many of the inscriptions of the Saka and Pahlava period are religious dedications, often recording the deposit of Buddhist relics and foundations. Under Maues, early under Saka rule, the Taxila copper plate of Patika[88] records the establishment of the relics of the Lord Śākyamuni and the founding of a *saṃghārāma* for the worship of all Buddhas. From the period of the Azes dynasty we have a growing series of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions from Buddhist reliquaries – the Bimaran vase, [89] the reliquaries of Indravarma and Ramaka, [90] of Satrea,[91] of Ajitasena,[92] etc. The establishment of Buddhist stupas, sometimes including Indo-Parthian coins, continued into the Pahlava and Kushan periods.

The Sakas of Mathura were also patrons of Buddhism. The Mathura lion capital[93] records the family gift made by the Chief Queen of the *mahākṣatrapa* Rajula (i.e. Rājūvula), Ayasia Kamuia, establishing a relic of the Buddha, founding a stupa and *saṃghārāma*, and granting land to Budhila, a monk from Nagara. The Brāhmī inscriptions in western India show similar benefactions by the western Saka satraps. The Nasik inscriptions of Ṛṣabhadatta, son-in-law of Nahapāna the Kṣaharāta satrap, [94] record the construction of caves and other benefactions to the Buddhists and endowments to provide for the monks in the rainy season.

There can be no doubt that the prevailing religion was Buddhism. But the Sakas also retained their own Iranian faith. The imposing temple of Jandial, in a key position outside the gate of Taxila, shows the high regard in which Zoroastrianism was held by the upper classes of Taxila. In general the Sakas seem to have had a sympathetic, tolerant attitude to all the religions of their subjects, Buddhism, Jainism, Brahmanism, etc., and the position did not change under the Pahlavas.

The reverse types of the coins of the Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians remain essentially in the Greek tradition. The Greek gods Zeus, Artemis, Apollo, Poseidon and Nike still dominate the types used by Maues, as well as the same Greek gods with Hermes, Pallas, Demeter and Heracles under the Azes dynasty, including, of course, animal types such

[87] For a study of the religious conditions in the Saka–Pahlava period, the dates provided by inscriptions and coins are the authoritative source materials. Architectural finds of Hindu divinities on coins suggest an atmosphere of catholicity in this period. The secondary sources include Nilankantha Sastri, 1957; Rosenfield, 1967.

[88] Konow, 1929, pp. 23–9.

[89] Ibid., pp. 50–2.

[90] Fussman, 1980, pp. 1–43.

[91] Fussman, 1985, pp. 29–34.

[92] Fussman, 1986, pp. 1–14.

[93] Konow, 1929, pp. 30–49.

[94] Senart, 1905, pp. 78 et seq.

as the lion, elephant and Indian humped bull. The divinities externally were wholly Greek, though for contemporary subjects they may have had a wider significance of other deities disguised under the *Interpretatio Graeca*. The Pahlavas continued in the same tradition. Gondophares naturally showed a preference for Nike in various forms, but also used for the first time the figure of Śiva on his coinage from the middle Indus provinces.

9

THE CULTURE OF THE XINJIANG REGION*

Ma Yong and Wang Binghua

Contents

The Xinjiang region

The Xinjiang region of China lies in eastern Central Asia to the north and south of the T'ien Shan mountain range. South of the T'ien Shan mountains lies the Tarim basin, bounded on the west by the Pamir plateau, 'the roof of the world', and on the south by the Kunlun and Altyn Taq mountain ranges. These three sides consist of high mountain peaks permanently covered with snow and ice, with few passes by which they may be crossed. The east side of the Tarim basin, however, is comparatively low and gives access to the Gansu corridor. The basin is rather like an inverted trapezium, with its centre occupied by the wide Taklamakan Desert. The melting snows of the Kunlun, T'ien Shan and Pamir mountain ranges flow from different directions towards the desert, forming short inland streams. These give rise to a number of oases, but each is relatively small; and the desert that separates them

* See Map 6

makes communications difficult. From antiquity it has been impossible for people to live anywhere but in these oases on its borders.

North of the T'ien Shan mountains lies the Dzungarian basin, shaped like an isosceles triangle, with the Altai mountains to the north-east, and a few low mountain ranges to the north-west, but no major barrier to the east or west. South of the basin in the T'ien Shan range there are many valleys with flourishing vegetation. The lands near the Urungu and Irtîsh rivers, with the upper reaches of the Ili, are all suitable for nomadic grazing.

The principal evidence for the history of Xinjiang in the centuries before the Christian era comes from archaeology. There are few reports in Chinese written records and these seem to be largely derived from hearsay. It has been suggested that the tribes living in the remotest east, mentioned by Herodotus (IV. 13) quoting the poet Aristeas, were the ancient peoples of the Altai mountains, but this is mere conjecture.[1]

The Xiangbaobao graves, Tashkurgan

The grasslands in the valley of the River Tashkurgan, some 4,000 m above sea-level, but still suitable for nomad grazing, have a large number of ancient graves still visible on the surface covered with blocks of stone. Forty graves of this type excavated at Xiangbaobao yielded Carbon-14 dates between the seventh and fourth centuries B.C.[2] In spite of varied methods of burial – sometimes inhumations in various positions with a wooden cover over the grave pit and sometimes cremations with no wooden cover – their funerary contents are basically uniform and belong to a single cultural type. Four graves contain the remains of human sacrificial victims. Most bones are decayed, but one well-preserved skull is of a Europoid type. The tombs contain few funerary objects, suggesting a poor, unostentatious life-style. Finds are mostly everyday utensils with hand-made pottery made from clay containing coarse sand and mica flakes, fired at a low temperature. Most of it is undecorated, with an uneven red-brown or grey-brown surface colour. Cooking implements and containers – cauldrons, jars, dishes, bowls and cups – predominate. This pottery has distinct marks of use, even to the extent of repair after breakage, and is found with metal objects such as iron knives and bronze arrows. The ornaments found include gold plaques, bronze or iron rings, earrings, buttons and terracotta, stone, bone and agate beads. A few bronze ornaments shaped as a pair of sheep's horns (Fig. 1) represent quite a high level of craftsmanship. Besides, these the graves have also yielded cloth woven from sheep's wool, sheepskin clothes, bones of animals (mostly sheep) and birds, and a wood-drill fire kindler

[1] Sun, 1984.
[2] Chen, 1981.

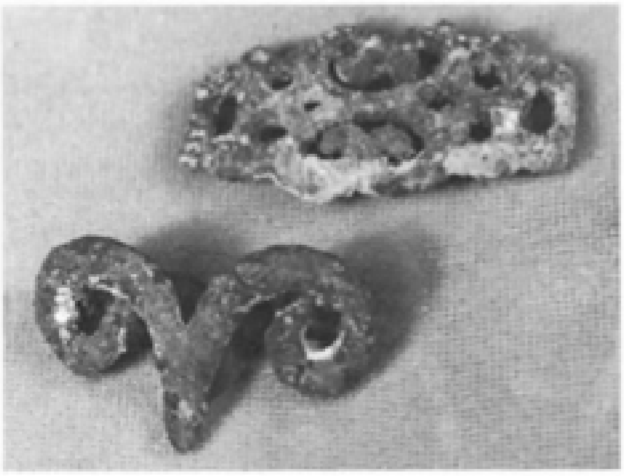


FIG. 1. Bronze ornaments: one is shaped like a pair of sheep's horns. Xiangbaobao, Tashkurgan.

of the type commonplace at oases in the Tarim basin. It is clear that these localities once supported fixed settlements of inhabitants who raised livestock, particularly sheep, as their principal economic support.

Hunting was an important supplementary occupation; the level of craftsmanship was quite low, but the use of metal was developed. Distinctions between rich and poor had already appeared in this society. It is not clear whether the variation in styles of burial was due to racial differences or chronological factors, but the coexistence of inhumation and cremation suggests that there may have been an amalgam of cultures. This locality borders Saka territory to the west and adjoins districts where the Ch'iang people lived to the south. The Europoid skull from an intact burial may represent the Sakas. The prevalence of cremation among the Ch'iang tribes may be seen in written records of the pre-Chin period.[3] These graves of the Tashkurgan region may therefore represent a mixed culture of the Saka and Ch'iang tribes.[4]

The Lou-lan graves at Lop Nor

In antiquity Lop Nor was a large salt lake at the hub of communications between the Gansu corridor and the Tarim basin, but changes in the course of rivers have caused it to dry up and become a salt marsh. The famous Lou-lan site lies on the north-west bank of the Lop Nor marsh, where the Kongque river now flows into the marsh. In the first century B.C. it

[3] *Mo-tzu*, Chapter 6; *Chieh-tsang* b; *Hsun-tzu*, Chapter 19; *Ta-lueh Lu-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, Chapter 17; *Hsias-lising-lau*, 1.

[4] Russian archaeologists have excavated ancient graves, similar to this culture, in the Pamir region in the former Soviet Union. See Bernshtam, 1952. These scholars believe that they belong to the Saka culture.

was the capital of the state of Shan-shan. The graves found near by used to be considered as graves of the Western Han period, but recent Chinese excavations have yielded material from the seventh to the first century B.C.[5] These graves have a coffin chamber of wooden planks in a shallow pit. The corpse, laid in an extended position, was wrapped in a woollen cloth, and wore hide boots and a peaked brown felt hat with bird feathers. The borders of the women's hats were often embroidered. The woollen cloth was gathered into a pouch on the upper chest and filled with fragments of branches of the medicinal herb ephedra. They also contained a small basket woven from hemp or grass containing up to fifty grains of wheat.

Due to the extreme aridity, many of the corpses have been preserved. Their physical features are very clear. They have golden hair slightly curled, a high nose, deep-set eyes, rather long eyebrows and narrow cheeks. Anthropological measurements suggest *Homo Alpinus* features, similar to the ancient peoples of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush regions. The graves also contain wooden and stone female figurines, with long, round faces. They have clothes woven from wool and wear a pointed hat, with long hair falling in plaits over their shoulders. Their physique presents an interesting study, depicting the physique and dress of the people of the time. Most of the funerary objects found are articles of everyday use and include ornaments. In early tombs there is no pottery, and utensils are made of woven grass, wood, bone or horn. They used wild hemp and tamarisk branches to make cups, jars and baskets, utilizing varying textures to create patterns. Occasionally the exterior of a basket is daubed red.

Wooden basins, cups and spoons, as well as horn cups, are quite common in finds. Felt was used widely for clothes and everyone had a felt hat. Woollen clothes are almost all of plain pattern and arc generally coarse, of relatively good quality. The hides have been tanned, craftsmanship is quite high, and there are many varieties of attractive leather boots. Beads, strung together and hung around ankles and neck – some of amber, agate or jade, but mostly made from the bones of small animals or birds – were used as ornaments. Groups of bone tubes about 10 cm long were sometimes linked together and worn round the waist. Among the funerary objects there were also large numbers of sheep and ox bones.

It is easily seen that raising of domestic animals, fishing and hunting were the principal economic activities of the inhabitants. Their life-style depended primarily on their animals but they also made use of local wild plants. A small quantity of wheat grain was found

[5] In the past there were many reports of this culture type in the Lop Nor region. See Stein, 1974; Huang, 1948. In recent years the Archaeological Research Institute of the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences has made three surveys near the Lop Nor, and on the lower reaches of the Kongque river, and has gathered a collection of fairly complete scientific materials. They are currently being collated and a report will soon be published.

among the funerary objects but no agricultural tools have been found and there are no traces of agricultural fields or irrigation works of the period in the vicinity. This clearly suggests that they did not follow an agricultural economy and probably received the grains of wheat in exchange from neighbouring tribes who were engaged in agriculture.

The Lou-lan sites lie within the ancient territory of Shan-shan, where the soil is both sandy and saline. In describing the state of Shan-shan, the *Han-shu* says that 'the earth is sandy and salty and its fields are few. It has to rely for grain on neighbouring states.' Grain was a particularly precious commodity and its scarcity, because there was no local production, accounts for the low living standard of the area. The ornamentation employed, however, points to quite a developed aesthetic taste in an inhospitable climate.

The pebble graves of Alagou (Turfan County)[6]

At Alagou, below the southern slopes of the T'ien Shan mountains near the Ordos grasslands, many ancient graves have been found. There are two principal types, suggesting two different cultures. One group has a very distinctive pebbled burial chamber. After a pit was dug, its perimeter walls were lined with pebbles to form a tomb chamber 2 m deep with a diameter of 2 to 3 m. Tombs of this type with similar contents have also been found at Lake Ayding-köl and Subashi in Shan-shan County,[7] suggesting an extension of this culture into the Turfan basin. Carbon-14 testings date the graves between the eighth and second centuries B.C. The early graves have multiple burials. Each grave contained between ten and twenty bodies of men and women, old and young, piled on top of each other. They all lay face upwards with the head in a westward direction. Funerary objects were placed near the head and at the waist. Below the waist was placed a considerable quantity of bones of sheep, horses, oxen and camels, apparently intended to reflect the deceased's material prosperity.

In some instances, hair arrangements were preserved in a recognizable style. They had all worn their hair long, parted centrally, with each half combed into plaits and kept in place at the back of the head by a bone or wooden hairpin. A delicately woven silk hairnet was then put over the top (Fig. 2). Many short wooden combs were found in the graves which had presumably been used for combing out the plaits. There were a great variety of woven

[6] The excavation work of the Alagou pebble-grave sites was directed by Wang Binghua of the Archaeological Research Institute of the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences, and altogether eighty of these graves were excavated. For a brief survey see Archaeological Research Institute, 1979.

[7] The excavation of the ancient graves of Lake Ayding-köl and Subashi was undertaken by the Cultural Observation Unit of Turfan, Xinjiang. The materials have been kept in this unit and are currently being arranged.



FIG. 2 Silk hairnet. Alagou, Turfan County.

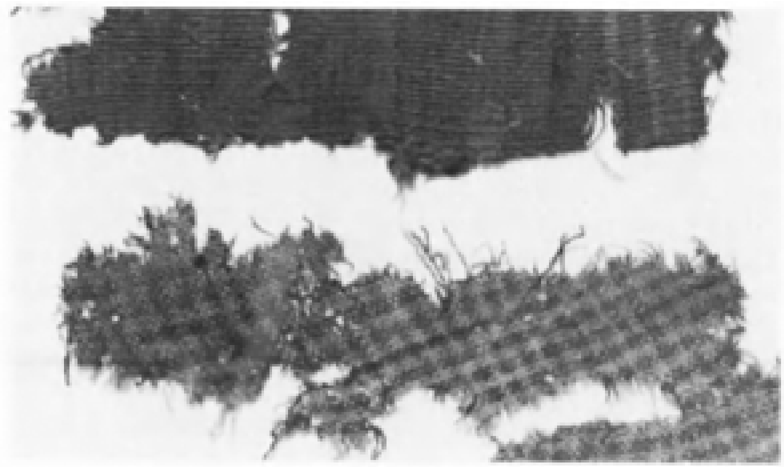


FIG. 3 Woollens. Alagou, Turfan County.

materials, much rather coarse and loosely woven, but some heavy woollen cloth was of a high standard. Some cloths were plain woven, others interwoven. Light blue, light red and deep black dyes were employed, and striped, criss-cross and triangular patterns were used. All this is clear evidence of a developed weaving industry of a high standard (Fig. 3). In fact several wooden and clay spinning whorls, used for twisting woollen thread, were found.

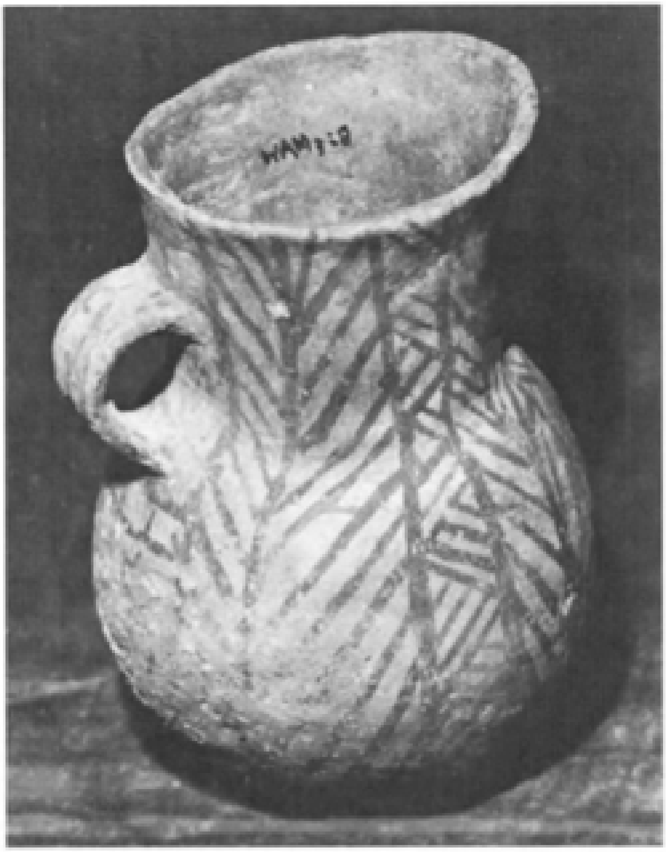


FIG. 4. Painted ceramic jar. Alagou, Turfan County.

The inhabitants clearly practised animal husbandry, but there is also evidence of agriculture. Some pottery jars were found to contain crop seeds such as flax. There is also evidence of hunting in the wooden arrow-shafts and three-edged arrow-heads filed from hard wood.

There were some bronze objects, but most implements for everyday use were made of wood and pottery, often painted with a light black pattern on a grey-red body – vessels such as jars, dishes, bowls, jugs and cups all being made by hand. They are decorated with triangular, net, whorl and pine-needle patterns (Figs. 4 and 5). Wooden objects including trays, bowls, spoons, cups and plates with engraved designs (Fig. 6) point to the skill of the artisans. There are a considerable number of bronze objects, primarily round bronze plates and small bronze knives; and wooden fire drills are found in virtually every grave. It must have been the normal method for obtaining fire at the time (Fig. 7).

In craftsmanship the ornaments have great individuality. There are many strings of beads of bone, agate and jade, and both bronze and gold earrings. There are also ornaments made of cowrie shell. Some bone ornaments are carved with the heads of animals such as



FIG 5. Painted ceramic jar. Alagou, Turfan County.



FIG 6. Carved wooden plate. Alagou, Turfan County.

wild boars or bears, in a vigorous style. Graves of the later period are rather different. The practice of multiple burials was replaced by single or double burials, suggesting a change in social structure. Graves are still pebble-lined, but now contain a wooden bench supported by four pillars. Funerary objects now include iron tools and weapons and craft products such as silks (Fig. 8), phoenix-pattern embroidery and lacquer cups, imports from China.

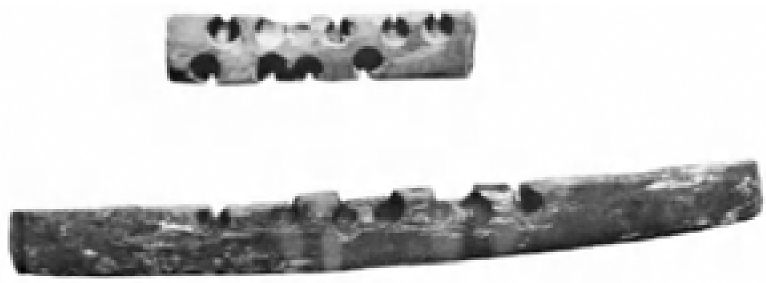


FIG 7. Wood-drill fire sticks. Alagou, Turfan County.



FIG 8. Fragments of embroidered silk. Alagou, Turfan County.

The proportion of plain pottery (mainly of a red-brown and grey-brown colour) greatly increased. Some new vessel forms are introduced, particularly the high-footed pottery cup and wooden dish. All these changes show that the inhabitants were increasingly subject to the influence of the culture and economy of China. The early graves of the Chü-shih people from the north of Yaerhu in Turfan County have funerary objects, other contents, and pottery basically similar to those of the Alagou pebble-grave culture,[8] and this suggests that the pebble-graves at Alagou also belong to the Chü-shih.

[8] Huang, 1933.

The wooden chamber graves at Alagou (Turfan County)

Not far from the pebble-grave sites at Alagou, ancient graves belonging to a different cultural type have been found.[9] These graves appear as heaps of stones at ground level. Beneath there is quite a large vertical pit with a volume of some 200 m^3. The pit is filled with sand and piled stones which seem to have been brought from the nearby river bed. In the centre is a wooden coffin-chamber constructed of pine, which abounds in T'ien Shan. The wood, cut to size, is arranged in a criss-cross manner, vertically and horizontally, to line the four walls of the pit, and the roof is also covered with wood to form a coffin-chamber. The dead were buried singly or in pairs, always lying flat with the face upwards. It appears that some sort of red pigment was applied before burial. In most graves the chamber had caved in due to the collapse of stones above, when the wooden roof decayed. The skeletons are generally poorly preserved, but enough survive to suggest that they had a well-built physique. Carbon-14 dating places these graves between the fourth and second centuries B.C. The funerary objects found are rich in quantity and equally refined in quality. Many are gold luxury items such as beads. There are also round gold plaques, rather thick and heavy, beaten into a tiger pattern by a hard moulding tool. The tiger's body curves in a semi-circle in an active and expressive pose. These plaques, originally fixed in leather, seem to have been used to decorate belts. There are more than 100 gold-foil flakes, no thicker than a sheet of paper. Some are in the form of animals, others arc shaped as willow leaves, or formed into diamonds or circles. The animals on these gold-foil flakes may be leaping lions or a pair of tigers crouching face to face. There are holes at the edges and at the two ends to enable them to be sewn as ornamentation onto clothes. Serving the same purpose were similar plaques in silver, also pressed into a range of animal designs (Fig. 9). There was also a remarkable bronze tray consisting of three separate parts – a square stand, the main body and two lion-like animals standing in the centre of the tray. The three sections had been cast separately, and then welded together by pouring liquid bronze on to the joints (Fig. 10). This unusual type of bronze tray with animal figures has also been found in ancient graves in the Ili valley in Xinyuan County. There were also a few iron knives and arrows intended for domestic use. The standard of smelting of the gold, copper and iron objects is good and the metal, except for objects in silver, is relatively pure.

Other luxury goods are agate beads, pearls, silk goods (such as a diamond-pattern gauze), lacquerware, trays (Fig. 11) and cups which came from the Yellow River region

[9] Wang Binghua, 1981, pp. 18–22.



FIG. 9. Silver plaque from a wooden chamber grave. Alagou, Turfan County.



FIG. 10. Bronze tray with two statues of lion-like animals from a wooden chamber grave. Alagou, Turfan County.

and provide evidence for trade links with China. Everyday household utensils include articles in a fine smooth pottery burnished to a glossy surface. The pottery objects are generally hand-made of fine craftsman-ship, and have been fired at quite a high temperature. They include bowls, dishes, trays and small cups. Some vessels have three flat feet affixed to the base of the bowl – an unusual feature. These objects are very different from the pottery vessels recovered from the pebble-graves in the same locality.



FIG. 11. lacquer tray *in situ* in a wooden chamber grave. Alagou, Turfan County.

Most of the funerary objects from the wooden chamber graves are household utensils and superior luxury goods, rarely production tools. It is clear that the persons buried in these graves must have been the chief nobles, not ordinary members of the nomad tribes.

The north–south orientation of these graves, the wooden coffin-chambers and their contents suggest an intimate connection with the Wu-sun culture in the Ili river basin.[10] Similar graves, also aligned from north to south, have been found between Zhangye and Tun-huang in the Gansu corridor. The *Han-shu* says that the Wu-sun tribe originally lived in the western part of the Gansu corridor together with the Yüeh-chih, but escaped to the Hsiung-nu when the Yüeh-chih killed their chief. A generation later, the Yüeh-chih were defeated by the Hsiung-nu and forced to migrate west to the Ili valley. To avenge this ancient wrong, the Wu-sun attacked the Yüeh-chih, drove them out and occupied their land. These events took place in the first half of the second century B.C. (*Han-shu* 61, Biography of Chang Ch'ien; *Han-shu* 96, Record on the Western Regions.)

It may be recorded that the years in which the Wu-sun tribes depended on the Hsiung-nu, after they had been driven out of their homeland in the western part of the Gansu corridor by the Yüeh-chih, represented a period of greatness for the Hsiung-nu, with their power and influence possibly extending over the Altai mountains to the west. This was the

[10] The Archaeological Research Institute of the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences has undertaken many excavations of the Ili river valley Wu-sun graves of the Han period, the successive directors of this work being Yi Manbo, Wang Mingzhe and Wang Binghua. Parts of the materials have already been published. See Archaeological Team, 1962; Ma and Wang, 1978, pp. 14–15; Archaeological Research Institute, 1979. The majority of materials has not yet been published and is stored in the Archaeological Research Institute of the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences.

time when the Alagou District of Turfan was under the control of the Hsiung-nu; and it can therefore be suggested that the Wu-sun tribes perhaps lived here under their protection, and the wooden chamber graves might be attributed to the Wu-sun. This context is consistent with the Carbon-14 dating, the geographical situation and the period of time covered by the wooden chamber-grave culture at Alagou.

The T'ien Shan settlements

Below the northern slopes of the T'ien-Shan mountains, where grass grows in profusion, there is excellent grazing and land suitable for cultivation. Many sites that were associated with settled cultures have been discovered. In the east, scattered through Tuergan, are a series of sites usually between 1,000 and 2,000 m^2, while the largest is 7,000 m^2.[11] The remains of houses with thick walls of earthen bricks and stone built to resist the severe winters of the region are still visible. The most interesting objects found are the large number of stone-mill trays. At Kuisu thirty to forty were found, several being worn from long use. At a number of sites painted pottery, stone axes, stone adzes, heavy bronze axes and bronze knives have been found. These sites lie between Lake Tuer-köl in the east and Lake Bar-köl (the famous Pu-li Sea of antiquity) to the west. The *Hou Han-shu* says that the state of Pu-li was called after a tribe of that name that engaged in agriculture, while some of its members led a nomadic life. When the Hsiung-nu controlled the western region, the King of Pu-li offended the Hsiung-nu ruler, the Pu-li tribe were expelled and their land was occupied by a people devoted to animal husbandry who knew nothing of agriculture. It may therefore be suggested that the sites of the ancient settled culture to the east of Lake Bar-köl may belong to the early period of the Pu-li tribe.

The ancient village site of Sidaogou, 10 km west of Mulei,[12] has traces of habitation in the form of post-holes, kitchen ranges and ash pits. Carbon-14 dating suggests an early occupation of around 1000 B.C. and a later one from around the fourth century B.C. There are few funerary objects from the associated graves, but the habitation site finds included pottery, stone, bone and bronze articles. From the later period new articles have been found such as cups, cauldrons, pallets and container vessels, and the proportion of painted pottery increased, with vermilion colouring making its appearance. Most tools are of stone in good craftsmanship mill quarries, mortars and pestles, spindle whorls, hoes, adzes, etc. There are bone spindle whorls, needles, combs and arrows, as well as bronze knives, hairpins, rings

[11] For relevant material, see Li, 1959; Wu, 1964; and Archaeological Research Institute, 1979.
[12] Yang, 1982.

and ornaments. The bones of horses, oxen, sheep and dogs suggest the involvement of these animals in the economic life of the time.

It is clear that the people living in these areas led a sedentary life and were engaged in agriculture and domestic animal husbandry, with hunting as a supplementary activity. The appearance of terracotta knife moulds suggests that they had already grasped the art of casting bronze objects, while their painted pottery resembles that of the Shajing culture to the west of Gansu.

Grave sites on the slopes of the Altai mountains

The zone between the Altai mountains and the Dzungarian basin provides ideal grazing throughout the year. The nomadic peoples who lived there have left behind them many rock carvings of large-horned sheep, horses and deer, and men with taut bows and flying arrows. But it is difficult to suggest either the time or the people responsible for them.

Three principal types of grave have been found in the zone. The first type is the large stone tumulus found near Huahaizi in Qinghe Province. The largest example of this type of tumulus has a circumference of 230 m, encircled by a ring of stones, with a square polished granite stela 300 m to the north. The stela has carved running deer engraved on two sides. A second stela 10 m to the east has a carved circular and rhomboid pattern, with the carving of a lamb and a short sword. No graves of this group have yet been excavated.[13]

The second type is the 'stone-warrior' grave, which has an engraved figure of a man standing in front, sometimes represented by a human face carved on the upper part of a large boulder. Some have merely a stone bar symbolizing the human form. Behind the stone warrior there is a square stone coffin made from four enormous slabs of granite, capped by another slab. Inside the coffin the bones were found in complete disorder. There were multiple burials; and the objects found include stone arrows, stone cups, stone jars and pottery vessels with some bronze and iron objects (Figs. 12, 13–14).[14]

The third type is the earth-pit vertical shaft grave, a type often discovered in the same region as the stone-warrior graves, but there is no evidence for any relationship between the two.

The three types of grave clearly belong to three different cultures, but the absence of full-scale excavations precludes any detailed discussion of their characteristics and historical backgrounds; also the absence of written records makes it impossible to give any clear

[13] This type of large stone mound was surveyed in 1965 by the archaeological team of the Institute of Nationalities of the Xinjiang branch of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. For materials from the former Soviet Union and Mongolia, see Savinov and Chlenova, 1978.

[14] Wang Mingzhe, 1981, pp. 23–32.

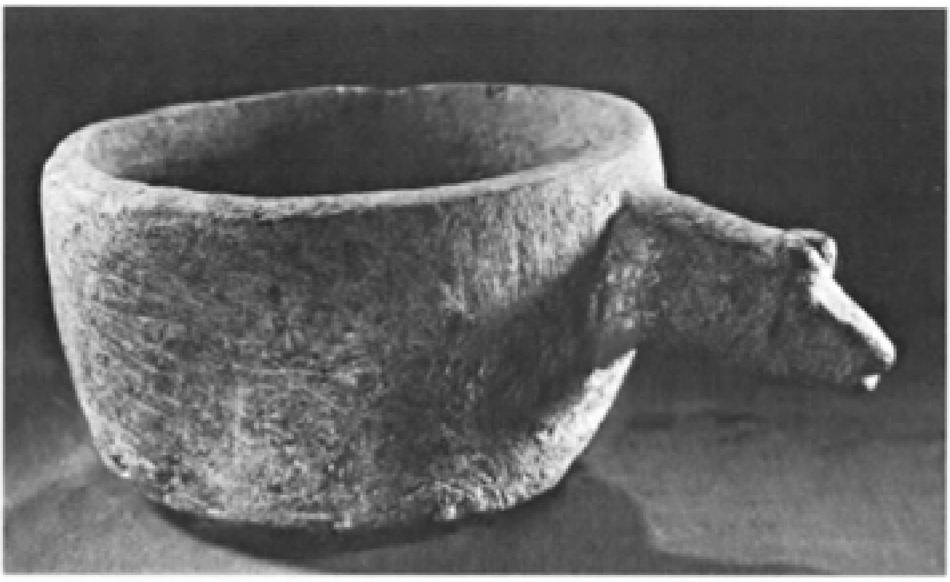


FIG. 12. Stone cup with handle in shape of cow's head from a stone-warrior grave. Keermuqi, Altai County.



FIG. 13. Coupled stone cups from a stone-warrior grave. Keermuqi, Altai County.

answers to questions of ethnic identity. Such a broad study of the different grave-culture peoples of Xinjiang would be incomplete without reference to classical Greek literature, which mentions some of the tribes who might be associated with these areas. Literary works in both China and the West seem to focus primarily on the area to the north of Xinjiang – the slopes of the Altai mountains and the grasslands north of the Dzungarian Desert. This is probably because between the seventh and second centuries B.C. the

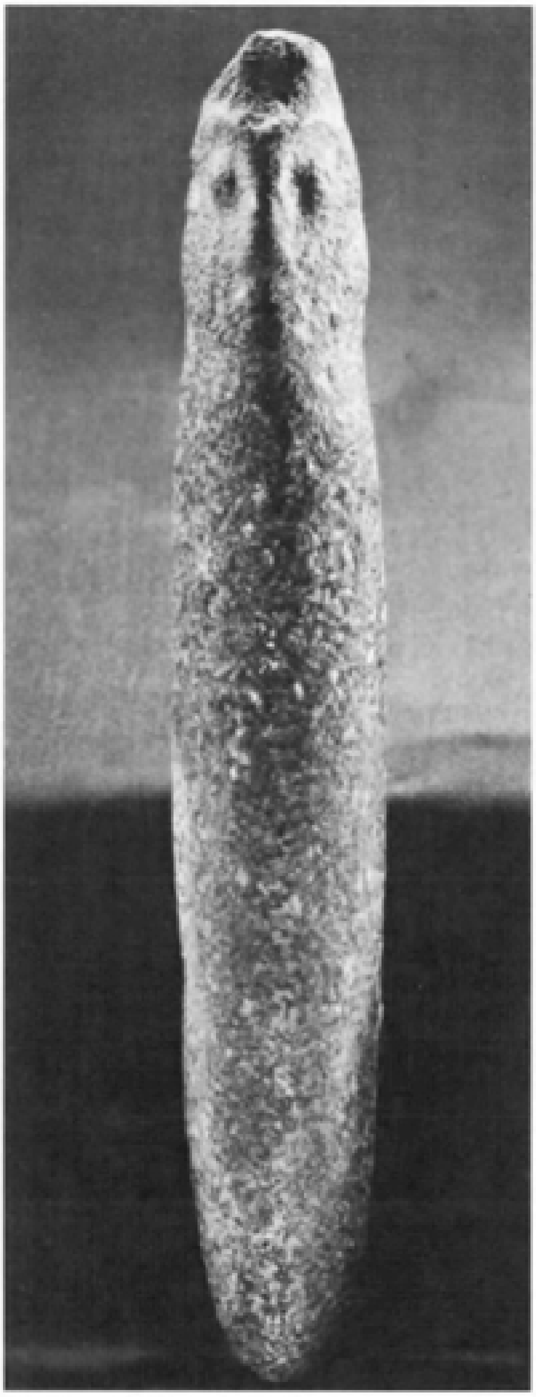


FIG. 14. Small stone figurine from a stone-warrior grave. Keermuqi, Altai County.

principal route across Eurasia ran north-west from the Inner Mongolian grasslands near Hetao over the Altai mountains along the Irtîsh river. Having crossed the south Siberian grasslands, it again went west to reach the land of the Scythians on the northern shores of the Black Sea, as archaeological finds seem to confirm. The evidence from the epic

Arimaspea, referring to the Issedones as neighbours of the Massagetae (Strabo XV. 1.6), speaks for their nomadic identity but it is difficult to identify them with the tribes noted in the Chinese annals. Some Chinese scholars have identified the geographical location of the territory of the Issedones with the Yüeh-chih or Wu-sun on the upper reaches of the Ili river and in Xinjiang, but thisremains uncertain. What is clear is that between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C. there was a powerful confederacy of nomadic tribes under the name of Yüeh-chih living on the steppes to the south of the Altai mountains; and the graves excavated in different areas of Xinjiang confirm the existence of several nomadic groups and throw light on some of their cultural and political relations.

10

The Western Regions under the Hsiung-nu and the Han*

Ma Yong and Sun Yutang

Contents

The triangular clash

The second century B.C. had a profound influence on the history of Central Asia.

This was the century in which the clash between two great powers, the Hsiung-nu and the Han, for the mastery of the Western Regions took place. The Hsiung-nu people originally lived in the northern part of present-day Shaanxi in China. During the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., faced with the northward expansion of the states of Ch'in and Chao, they were forced to migrate to the grasslands of Inner Mongolia, where they became a strong tribal confederation, and subsequently controlled many of the nomad peoples of Mongolia. Early in the second century B.C. the Hsiung-nu drove out the Yüeh-chih and took possession of their land. At that time there were several communities in the oases round the Tarim

* See Map 6

basin leading a sedentary life, occupied in agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry. In the Turfan basin to the west of Lop Nor and along the northern foot of the Kunlun and Altai ranges were scattered communities carrying on a semi-agricultural and semi-nomadic way of life. These groups had organized themselves around urban centres to form a series of petty kingdoms. The Han historians refer to these as the 'Walled City-States of the Western Regions'. There were some thirty-six of them, the more important being Chü-shih(Turfan), Lou-lan, Yen-ch'i (Qarashahr), Ch'iu-tzŭ (Kucha), Ku-mo (Aksu), Shu-lê(Kashgar), So-chü (Yarkand), Yü-t'ien (Khotan) and Chü-mi (Khema). Because of the great distances between them they were not integrated into one strong political unit, and were unable to offer any effective resistance to the Hsiung-nu.

Under Mao-tun, the Hsiung-nu consolidated their position. The land west of the Altai mountains, with the 'Walled City-States', was ruled by the Prince of Li-jhu. The Hsiung-nu under him were nomads living on the grassy plain around Lake Pu-li (modern Lake Bar-köl). A resident with the title 'general-in-charge of slaves' was installed to keep watch on the petty Walled City-States, with the duty of levying taxes from them. The Hsiung-nu clearly considered all the peoples living in the Walled City-States as slaves, but left their original political organization undisturbed. No doubt their princes had been sent as hostages to the Hsiung-nu. Taxes to the Hsiung-nu would naturally be paid in agricultural produce such as grain and fruit. The tribal confederation of the Hsiung-nu was prepared to challenge the Han in China, which suffered from political instability following the tyrannical rule of the Ch'in and the widespread civil war. The Chinese tried to appease the Hsiung-nu through intermediaries, by paying indemnity and providing gifts for several decades. Eventually, after forty years of peace during the reigns of Wen-ti and Ching-ti, the Han had sufficient economic and military power to confront the Hsiung-nu. Emperor Wu-ti, who ascended the throne in 140 B.C., proposed joint action with the Yüeh-chih against their common enemy, the Hsiung-nu, and sent a mission under Chang Ch'ien to the Yüeh-chih, in the Ili river basin, seeking an alliance. About 117 B.C. Chang Ch'ien was again sent on a mission to the Wu-sun, and dispatched deputy envoys to the countries of Ta-yüan, K'ang-chü, Yüeh-chih and Ta-hsia. The information he collected was recorded by the great historian Szŭ-ma Ch'ien in the *Shih-chi* the earliest reliable Chinese literary source for the history of Central Asia.

After Chang Ch'ien's first mission there was a long struggle for control of the Western Regions. In 121 B.C. one of the Hsiung-nu leading nobles ruling over the Gansu corridor surrendered to the Han, who set up the four prefectures of Wu-wei, Chang-i, Chiu-ch'üan and Tun-huang, the first step towards extending Han power over the Western Regions. After this the oasis kingdoms of the Tarim basin, previously dependants of the

Hsiung-nu,successfully transferred their allegiance to the Han. The campaign by the Han general Li Kuang-li against Ta-yüan (part of modern Ferghana) in 101 B.C. further increased the political prestige and influence of the Han.

The clash between the Han and the Hsiung-nu now focused on Chü-shih (the modern Turfan basin), an area of great strategic importance. During the first half of the first century B.C. internal rivalries greatly weakened Hsiung-nu power. In 60 B.C., the Hsiung-nu prince Jih-chu surrendered to the Han; the Hsiung-nu post of 'general-in-charge' was abolished. The eventual victor in the internal rivalries, *shan-yü* Hu-han-yeh, surrendered to the Han in 54 B.C. After this event the thirty-six states of the Western Regions came under the direct rule of the Han. They invested Ch'eng Chi as the first *hsi-yü tu-hu* (protector-general of the Western Regions), that is, the highest civil and military official in charge of the area. From then until the end of the reign of Wang Mang (*c.* A.D. 23), there was an unbroken succession of protectors-general, eighteen in all, of whom ten names have come down to us.[1] The last protector-general, Li Chung, died at Kucha and his personal seal has been discovered in Shaya County, Xinjiang.[2]

China and the Western Regions

The large-scale peasant uprising in the last years of Wang Mang's reign and the ensuing civil war left the Eastern Han dynasty too exhausted to regain control over the Western Regions. After a fierce war between the petty kingdoms, the state of So-chü (Yarkand) gained hegemony over the area for a few years. The Southern Hsiung-nu remained subject to the Han, and stayed within the northern prefectures; but the Western Hsiung-nu invaded the Western Regions, and the Walled City-States of the Western Regions fell once more into their hands.

In the first years of the Eastern Han period, three fierce battles were fought for the control of the Western Regions. Pan Ch'ao was the best-known Han general. His military career of thirty-one years (A.D. 73–102) was crowned with success, and he was popular with the people of the oasis states. He successfully averted the invasion of the army sent by a Kushan king who attempted to interfere in the affairs of the Walled City-States, and sent his envoy, Kan Ying, on a mission to Tiao-chih (the Persian Gulf). Kan Ying was, however, prevented from completing his journey by the Parthians.

[1] Huang Wenbi, 1981, pp. 310–14.

[2] Huang Wenbi, 1958, p. 113. The seal inscription is '*Li Chong shi yin xin*'. Huang inexplicably rendered '*xin*' as two separate characters and hence failed in its decipherment. See Ma, 1975, p. 29.

In A.D. 126 Pan Ch'ao's son, Pan Yung, again defeated the Northern Hsiung-nu and consolidated Han rule in the Western Regions. Instead of the protector-general the Han court now appointed a *hsi-yü chang-shih* (secretary-general), a post that was retained until the end of the reign of Ling-ti '*c.* A.D. 188'. At least eight of these officials are recorded in documentary sources.

The protracted civil war in China towards the end of the Eastern Han severed links with the Western Regions, but the Northern Hsiung-nu also declined. One part migrated to the west, another part was dispersed over Gansu, Shaanxi and Inner Mongolia and, like the Southern Hsiung-nu, began to merge with the local inhabitants of China. Meanwhile, a new nomadic confederation, the Hsien-pi, took over the Mongolian plateau and the lands west of the Altai mountains. During the first half of the third century A.D., China proper was divided into three independent states, the Wei, Shu and Wu. Both the Wei and the Shu re-established relations with the Western Regions, the Wei reviving the post of secretary-general. A substantial number of wooden tablets with Chinese inscriptions belonging to the Wei and Ch'in periods have been found in the ruins of Lou-lan north-west of Lop Nor.[3] They are official documents and archives from the office of the secretary-general, governor of the Western Regions.

The economy of the oasis states

The economic base of these oasis states was farming and horticulture, with irrigation and animal husbandry. Numerous dwelling sites have been discovered recently in the Tarim basin dating from the Han, the most famous being at Niya in the north of Minfeng County. The remains of houses are spread along both banks of the now dry Niya river, covering an area of 10 km (south to north) by 25 km (east to west). The houses had floors made from a mixture of wheat-straw, cow-dung and mud; their walls were made of wattle woven with tamarisk twigs daubed with mud, and fitted with fireplaces. Around the settlement were extensive orchards. This site and the economic life it reflects are representative of the oasis states in this area (Fig. 1).[4] In places where the land was poor or sandy, as in Shan-shan, and it was impossible to rely upon agriculture, people reared animals and obtained cereals from the agricultural oases by barter.

The most outstanding handicraft product of the Western Regions under Han rule was probably textiles. Because herding was widespread, skins and woollen garments were used for protection. Many pieces of woollen cloth, brightly coloured and beautifully figured,

[3] Luo and Wang, 1914; Huang Lie, 1981, pp. 58–63.
[4] Shi, 1962.



FIG. 1. Ruins of a village. Niya.

have been found in ruins of the Han period. Fragments of woollen cloth with remarkably beautiful designs of men, animals, vines, tortoiseshell and petal patterns (Fig. 2) were found in a husband-and-wife tomb of the Eastern Han period in Minfeng County. Tapestries from the Western Regions used for bed coverings, carpets and hangings were held in high esteem by the Han people.[5] Clothing was also made from linen, cotton and silk. Flax was extensively cultivated in the Western Regions and had quite a long history. Cotton perhaps first entered the area from India. Two pieces of dyed cotton cloth of this period have been found at Niya (Fig. 3). Using a white ground, the cloth is dyed with wax and indigo to form beautiful designs comparable in quality to modern products using the same technique in China today. One beautifully designed piece of dyed cotton has a head 'perhaps of Buddha' surrounded with a halo and the figure of a dragon. In terms of decorative style it has strong Indian characteristics, but the dragon is certainly Chinese in conception. It is not clear whether this material was imported or a local product, but it does show that the inhabitants of the Western Regions were using high-quality batik-dyed cotton clothes during theEastern Han period. There is no doubt about the Chinese origin of silks. The Emperor Wu-ti and Chang Ch'ien had opened up the Silk Route, and the Han court regularly presented gifts of all sorts of silk. Many pieces of Han silk have been found in Xinjiang in the Wusun tombs at Zhaosu and in the Han sites at Lop Nor. Among the best-preserved pieces of silk are those from the tomb of a husband and wife at Minfeng. There is hardly any item of clothing in the tomb that is not of finely woven silk, with quality embroidery. One robe is decorated with Chinese characters wishing 'Good luck for 10,000 generations', while a 'crowing-cock' pillow suggests the idea of rising early in the morning. Other beautifully woven Chinese characters wish 'Long life and good fortune to you and your descendants'.

[5] Ma, 1983*b*.



FIG. 2. Woollen cloth with figures of men, animals and grapes.

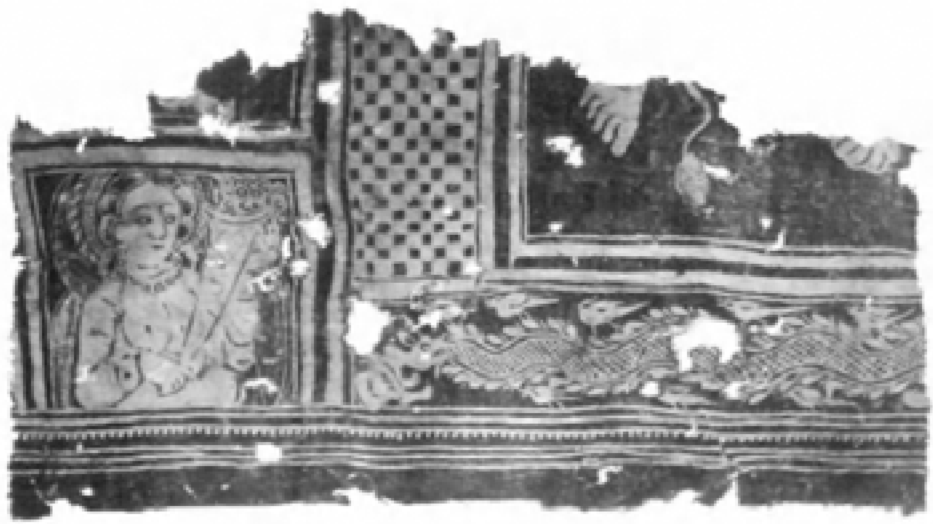


FIG. 3. Wax-resist dyed cotton cloth.

They were obviously in daily use in China proper, but the narrow sleeves of the brocade robe suggest a local fashion that was possibly tailored locally (Fig. 4).[6]

The Western Regions had already developed mining and metal casting techniques prior to the Han dynasty. The *Han-shu* description of the Shou-ch'iang states that 'there is iron ore in the hills; and they produce their own arms – bows, arrows, long knives, swords and armour'. The natives of Shan-shan were also skilled at making arms and in the states west of Ch'ieh-mo 'the arms made were like those of the Han'. So-chü (Yarkand) 'has

[6] Ma, 1975, pp. 29–30.



FIG. 4. Brocade robe.

mountains containing iron ores' and in Ch'iu-tzŭ (Kucha) workmen were 'skilled at casting and had reserves of lead'. It is clear that iron-casting and steel-making were fairly widespread among the Walled City-States of the Western Regions, and were used in making both tools and weapons.

Mining sites of the Han period have been discovered at A'a Shan, Minfeng and Aqikê Shan. From A'a Shan the finds include crucibles, iron slag, ore and pottery like the bellows air pipe found in Shaanxi (Fig. 5). At Niya and elsewhere ore, sintered iron, slag, stone chisels, whetstones and fragments of iron shovels have been found; and houses there contained iron adzes and sickles with wooden handles. A copper-mining site has been located at Ka-ke-ma-ke. 'Wu-shu' coins of the Han period have been found at all these mining sites, suggesting that they were established after the beginning of Han rule in the Western Regions.[7] From the Wu-sun tomb site in Zhaosu County dating from Han times comes an iron ploughshare, and tool marks found on a wooden outer coffin show that iron tools were in use.[8] In the same context was found a strikingly beautiful gold ring set with precious stones, but it is not yet possible to determine whether it was imported or made locally.

The exchange of commodities between the Western Regions and the heartland of China expanded considerably during the Han period. At a number of Han sites in Xinjiang lacquerware, woven rattanware and bronze mirrors have been discovered, all imported from

[7] Ibid., pp. 29–30.
[8] Ma and Wang, 1978, pp. 11–12.

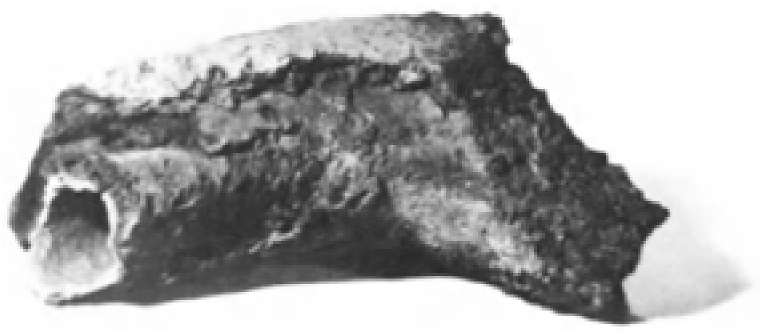


FIG. 5. Pottery bellows air-pipe.



FIG. 6. Toilet box and toiletries.

China proper (Fig. 6). It is especially worthy of mention that linen-made paper was discovered among Western Han remains at Lop Nor and paper of a similar kind has been found in Eastern Han tombs in Minfeng County.[9] Paper is one of the most striking inventions of China, dating back to the Western Han period. Paper appeared in the Western Regions soon after it was first invented in China, showing the speed at which commodities were exchanged between the two regions. China imported from the Western Regions fine breeds of horses, grapes, alfalfa and, of course, jade, the famous product of Khotan. The name Yümen Kuan (Jade Gate Pass) may have been given by the Chinese merchants who imported jade from the Western Regions. Some post-Han sources mention Chinese imports of *hu* paper (flax), *hu* gourds, *hu* peaches and *hu* stallions. The term 'hu' means 'Westernbarbarian' and points to the area from which they came. Fine woollen and cotton textiles from the Western Regions also flowed into China in large quantities.

[9] Huang Wenbi, 1948, p. 168, Plates 23, 24– 25.

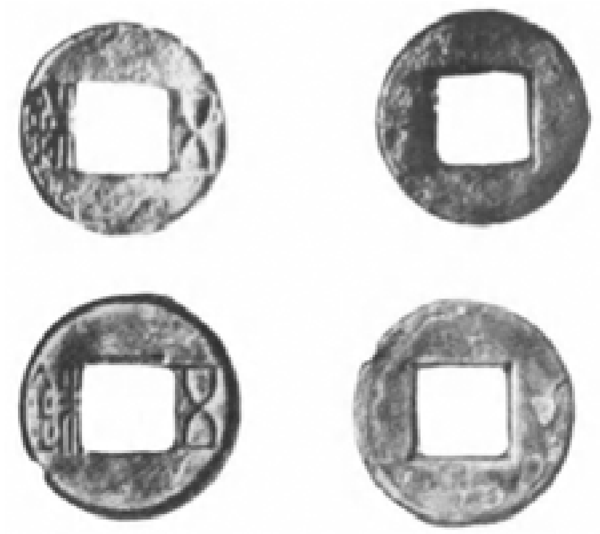


FIG. 7. Han 'Wu Shu' coins.

There is hardly one Han site in Xinjiang that has failed to yield a great number of Han coins, including varieties of all periods, clear evidence that under Han rule the coinage of China proper also circulated in the Western Regions (Fig. 7). The Walled City-States did not issue their own coins. The only exception was Khotan, which minted a small quantity of Sino-Kharoṣṭhī bilingual copper coins. They are round but, unlike Chinese cash, have no hole in the centre or trimmed line round the rim. The obverse has a legend in Chinese seal script indicating the value of the coin. On the reverse is a horse or camel surrounded by a Prakrit legend in Kharoṣṭhī script, giving the name and titles of the king. The coins were struck in two denominations, the larger with the legend 'bronze cash weight 24 shu', the smaller with ' *shu* cash'. Most of these coins were found at the oasis of Khotan and were early recognized as issues of the ancient state of Khotan. They were struck between A.D. 152 and 180, that is, in the last few decades of the Eastern Han period (Fig. 8), apparently not for economic reasons so much as for prestige. Consequently the quantity issued was small and circulation was limited. The use of Kharoṣṭhī script shows the influence of Kushan culture, but the honorific titles of the King of Khotan on the coins are on an equal footing with those of the Kushan kings, making it clear that at that time Khotan was not under Kushan rule. The fact that the legend indicating the value of the coin and the unit of value is in Chinese shows the strength of Chinese influence.

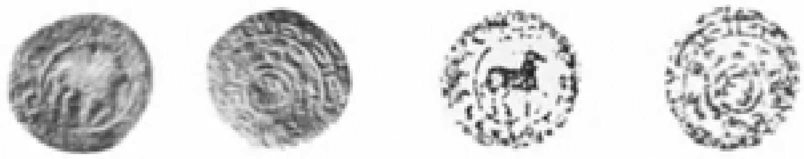


FIG. 8. Sino-Kharoṣṭhī bilingual coins.

Language, culture and religion

These Central Asian kingdoms had no script of their own; it seems that Chinese was well known, though the large number of Kharoṣṭhī documents found suggests that Chinese may have been used only for official purposes. In a number of Western Region states there were 'directors of interpreters', officials in charge of the translators, who had full knowledge of spoken, and probably also of written, Chinese because they were obliged to translate Chinese government documents. Some of the wooden tablets inscribed in Chinese discovered at Niya in Minfeng County are letters of the local nobility. The inscriptions on the tablets were in classical Chinese characters with very fine calligraphy, reflecting an excellent command of Chinese, which must have been their chief means of communication 'Fig. 9'. During the last decades of the Eastern Han period, as a result of Kushan influence, Kharoṣṭhī script seems to have dominated the Western Regions; the Sino-Kharoṣṭhī bilingual coins struck by the King of Khotan are perhaps the earliest instance of this.[10] Later, Kharoṣṭhī script reached the state of Shan-shan, [11] becoming the official script there for a period in the third and fourth centuries A.D.[12]

Besides using the Chinese script, some rulers of the oasis kingdoms also copied the Han court in other ways. Chiang-pin, King of Kucha during the late Western Han, took instructions of the Han court as his model in building his palace, setting his guards of honour and adopting the ringing of bells and beating of drums for court ceremonies. Yen, King of So-chü, also consulted and employed the ceremonial rules of the Han court.[13]

Our knowledge of burial customs is limited, except for Zhaosu County, where a number of Wu-sun graves have been excavated recently. The Wu-sun tombs with domed tumuli are found in groups, arranged in a row from north to south. Most contain wooden outer coffins, with inner walls decorated with felt hangings. Most are multi-chambered, with traces of wooden coffins, but sometimes the corpses were only wrapped in felt. The burials are in

[10] Ma, 1983*a*; Xia Nai, 1962.
[11] Luo and Wang, 1914; Huang Lie,1981, Tables 28–31.
[12] Ma, 1980*b*.
[13] For King Chiang-pin of Ch'iu-tzŭ, see *Han-shu* 96; for king Yen of So-ch, see *Hou Han-shu* chapter on the Western Regions.



FIG. 9. Wooden tablets with Chinese text.

the extended supine position, with the head pointing west. Most tomb furniture is poor and simple, there being pottery vessels and iron objects such as small awls. In some large tombs more luxurious grave furniture has been found, including such beautiful objects as the gold ring discussed above.[14] Near the Wu-sun area, a joint husband-and-wife burial has been found among the graves of the Eastern Han period at Niya, with their box-like wooden coffin standing on four feet, placed in a rectangular shaft with mid-coated tamarisk wattle; to judge from the covering and clothing of the deceased, these would seem to be the graves of the local higher nobility.[15] Earlier it was suggested that the boat-shaped wooden-coffin burials found in the Lop Nor area were the graves of the Lou-Ian people during the Han dynasty, but similar remains have now been found on the lower reaches of the Kongque river, dated by Carbon-14 to around 1000 B.C., so the so-called 'Lou-lan graves' can no longer be ascribed to the Han period.

Many scholars believe that Buddhism was brought into China at the end of the Western or the beginning of the Eastern Han period, hence the Western Regions must have received Buddhism even earlier. The supposition is that if Buddhism spread north-eastwards from India, it must naturally have been accepted first by the peoples of the Western Regions before reaching central China. The *Biography* of Pan Ch'ao, in the *Hou Han-shu* however, mentions that when he arrived in Khotan in A.D. 73, the local people believed in Shamanism and a shaman tried to kill his horse to practise sacrifices and incantations. This could not

[14] Archaeological Research Institute, 1979.
[15] *Wenwu*, 1960.

have been Buddhism, and must have been a local religion practised among the oasis states. A greater part of the chapter on the Western Regions in the *Hou Han-shu* was copied from Pan Yung's original written record of the Western Regions, which was completed by the end of the reign of Emperor An-ti, that is, around A.D. 124. Pan Yung spent the whole of his youth in the Western Regions and was familiar with the local customs. He was also interested in the question of Buddhism. But it was only when he spoke about the state of T'ien-chu (India) that he commented that the country 'practises the Buddhist Way and does not take life, which has now become the order of the day'. From his records we can find hardly any trace of Buddhism in the Western Regions under Han rule. Moreover, from an art-historical point of view none of the Buddhist caves with murals in Xinjiang can be dated before the beginning of the Eastern Han. It may therefore be suggested that Buddhism reached the Tarim basin around the middle of the second century A.D. There is no doubt that Buddhism reached China proper a little earlier. This may be explained in two ways. The first hypothesis is that the people who first brought Buddhism to China were Buddhists from the Kushan Empire. Although they took the road through the Western Regions, the object of their mission was the Han court. The introduction of Buddhism was therefore not by a gradual expansion across the Western Regions as some scholars envisaged. The alternative is that the spread of Buddhism into China during the Eastern Han came another way, perhaps by the sea route.

Chinese administration

The *Han-shu* chapter on the Western Regions gives a fairly clear description of the sphere of jurisdiction of the Han protector-general. Wherever a state did not come under hiscontrol, it was always indicated that this particular state 'was not subject to the protector-general'. The official residence of the protector-general was located at Wu-li (east of Lun-t'ai County, Xinjiang).

Among the inhabitants ruled by the protector-general was, first, the so-called 'Tocharian' group.[16] It is difficult to suggest a definite name for their language, which is, however, named after the ethnic group using it. Spoken by the Chü-shih, Yen-ch'i, Ch'iu-tzŭ and Lou-Ian 'Shan-shan' peoples, it was Indo-European, though its relation with other languages of the family remains unclear. We can distinguish three dialects: (a)the Kuchean

[16] The dispute about the term 'Tocharian language' is well known internationally so it is unnecessary to discuss it further here. In recent years most Chinese scholars have discarded this term and used the 'Yen-ch'i-Ch'iu-tzŭ language' in its place. Nevertheless, this language should also include the dialects of Chü-shih and Lou-lan (Shan-shan) area. Accordingly, the term 'Yen-ch'i–Ch'iu-tzŭ language' is not really appropriate. Therefore, for our present purpose we shall preserve the old usage and call it 'Tocharian'.

dialect, spoken by the Chü-shih and Ch'iu-tzŭ peoples (Tocharian B); (b) the Yen-ch'i dialect, spoken by the Yen-ch'i people (Tocharian A); and (c) the Lou-lan dialect, spoken by the Lou-lan people.[17] This Tocharian group as a whole settled along the northern fringes of the Tarim basin and to its east in the Turfan basin as well as the vicinity of Lop Nor. The second was the Ch'iang language group, of tribes settled along the northern foot of the Altyn, Kunlun and Karakorum ranges, the major tribe being the Yüeh-ch'iang. The Hsi-yeh, Pu-li, Yin-ai and Mo-lu-ti peoples, who lived on the south-east of the Pamir plateau, also belonged to the Ch'iang group, but they may also have been intermingled with the Sakas.[18] The language of the Ch'iang doubtless belonged to the Sino-Tibetan language family. They had close relations with the Ku-yang people in the Kui-lan mountain area and present-day Qinghai Province. The third was the Saka language group, spread over a broad area from south of Lake Balkhash to the south of the Pamir plateau, including such places as Shu-lê, Yü-t'ien, etc., in the western part of the Tarim basin. Except for the Wu-sun,who were mainly nomadic herdsmen, most of the population had formed themselves into the Walled City-States by the second century B.C., with agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry as the basis of their economy. Most of the city-states were very small. According to the population figures in the *Han-shu* the largest was Ch'iu-tzŭ 'Kucha' with a population of 81,317 and the smallest, Shan-huan, with only 194. It is clear that the kings of these oasis states were only rulers of a town or large village. For a time under the Eastern Han the thirty-six Walled City-States were divided further and became fifty-five. The *Hou Han-shu* records the population of some of these states at a later date, but in far less detail. Comparing the *Hou Han-shu* and the *Han-shu* we can see that the population in the Eastern Han period was about twice as much as in the Western Han period, but the total was still very small.

Under the rule of the protector-general and secretary-general of the Western Regions, all the kings of these states, large and small, were subject to the central government of the Han, as previously they had been subject to the central government of the Hsiung-nu. They had to send 'attendant sons' to the Han court. Their royal status, and the status of certain of their officials, was dependent on Han approval. According to the *Han-shu* the number of kings, aristocrats and ministers of the Walled City-States who had received seals of

[17] The Kharoṣṭhī documents found in the Kingdom of Shan-shan in Xinjiang are written in Gāndhārī Prakrit, but some words borrowed from the local language reflect the Lou-lan dialect, which should come under the so-called 'Tocharian' category. See Burrow, 1937.

[18] The *Han-shu* 96 alleged that the Hsi-yeh, Pu-li, Yin-ai and Mo-lu-ti were of the same nationality, 'differing from the Hu but similar to the Ch'iang and Ti'. 'Hu' here seems to belong to the east Iranian group. However, the archaeological remains we find in this area revealed that their culture had strong elements of the Sai (Saka) culture. (See Chapter 9 of the present volume.) The *Han-shu* notes that they were 'similar' to the Ch'iang or Ti, which shows that they were not of pure Ch'iang descent.



FIG. 10. Official seal of the ‘Han Kuei I Ch’iang Chang’.

authority from the Han court exceeded 376 (Fig. 10). In certain states, the Han also set up new official posts and sometimes even appointed Han people as officials.[19] For example, ‘marquis to attack the Hu’ and similar posts are obviously Han-conferred official titles. See Han-shu 96.

However, Han rule in the Western Regions differed from that of the Hsiung-nu. It only required the subject states to provide part of the military force needed to withstand the Hsiung-nu in time of war, and to accept responsibility for protecting communication lines along the Silk Route during time of peace.

Military and agricultural colonies

It was not enough to rely exclusively on the military strength of these small states for defence against Hsiung-nu incursions, therefore the Han government stationed some armed forces in the Western Regions. To avoid problems in supplying remote areas, and transporting provisions across the Gobi Desert, the *t’un-t’ien* (military agricultural colony) policy was adopted: the garrison troops were required to cultivate land on the spot. As early as the reign of Emperor Wu-ti, *t’un-t’ien* colonies were set up at Lun-t’ai and Ch’ü-li with an initial complement of several hundred farming conscripts led by envoy-commanders. During the reigns of Emperors Chao-ti and Hsüan-ti there were also *t’un-t’ien* colonies at I-hsun City (east of modern Ruoqiang County), Chü-shih ‘west of modern Turfan County’, Chih-ku (near the Issik-köl in Kyrgyzstan) and on the north-west bank of Lop Nor. The scale of the individual colonies increased and the number of garrison conscripts of Lun-t’aialone rose to 1,500. During Eastern Han rule there was a *t’un-t’ien* colony at I-wu(in the area of present-day Hami) and a ‘commander-in-charge of cereals’ was posted there.[20]

[19] For example, ‘marquis to attack the Hu’ and similar posts are obviously Han-conferred official titles. See *Han-shu* 96.

[20] Ma and Wang, 1978, pp. 11–12.

Liu-jong in the east of the Turfan basin was the long-term central location for the garrison troops and farming colonies. These troops were under the command of an officer of higher rank called the Wu-chi commandant.[21] The site of his headquarters was called Kao-ch'ang-pi, this being the origin for the use of the name Kao-ch'ang (Qocho) for the Turfan basin as a whole. During the latter days of the Eastern Han, the Wu-chi commandant had become the highest commanding officer of the Western Regions garrisons, comparable to the secretary-general, who held authority over the inhabitants of the Western Regions; duties were divided between the two.

Vestiges of the *t'un-t'ien* colonies of the Han period are still to be seen in Lun-t'ai, Shaya and Ruoqiang Counties, and the region close to Lop Nor, where traces of ancient irrigation channels and field ridges can be recognized on the red clay banks of the Qizil river. From the Tu-yin site on the north bank of Lop Nor large numbers of wooden tablets (Fig. 11) have been found, dating from the second half of the first century B.C., mostly official documents of the *t'un-t'ien* troops, reflecting their organization and original encampments, agricultural products, tools used, methods of cultivation, granaries and their daily life generally.[22] From these tablets we learn that these *t'un-t'ien* soldiers came from all over China's inner prefectures, bringing their families with them and living there for long periods of time, engaging on the one hand in agricultural labour, and on the other hand in fulfilling the task of military defence. East of Lop Nor and in the Turfan basin were important military granaries for storing provisions. These *t'un-t'ien* districts gradually developed into fixed Chinese settlements in the Western Regions.[23]

Closely related to the *t'un-t'ien* agricultural colonies was the work of irrigation.The Western Regions comprise a wide expanse of arid land with extremely low rainfall, where agriculture depends wholly on irrigation channels fed yearly by the melting snow. The construction of artificial irrigation systems is absolutely essential. Long before the Han dynasty, the local inhabitants must have constructed some irrigation channels, but the Han introduced the *t'un-t'ien* policy; there was a remarkable increase in irrigation construction due to the adoption of advanced technology from China proper. In Shaya County there are remains of an ancient Han irrigation channel more than 100 km long. Close to this channel Han coins and vestiges of cultivation were found. A Han irrigation system has also been discovered at Miran, following the course of the ancient Miran river, where main

[21] Hou, 1980.

[22] For the Lou-lan sites, see Huang Wenbi, n.d.*b*, pp. 181–4. For the latest investigations of the Lou-lan sites, see Hou, 1981. For the Tu-yin site, see Huang Wenbi, 1948, pp. 105–9. As to the remains of the ancient city of Kao-ch'ang (Qocho), reports and materials are abundant and so well documented that there is no need to cite them here.

[23] Ma, 1975, pp. 27–30.



FIG. 11. Wooden tablets relating to a Han *t'un-t'ien* colony.

floodgates, bifurcation gates, trunk and branch canals were constructed. Han tombs and other objects have also been found near by.[24] Nowadays in the Turfan basin the most famous and remarkable type of irrigation system is the so-called *kahrez* consisting of an underground channel descending the hill slope, which conducts meltwater on to the farmland.On the surface, walls are sunk at intervals, so that the underground channel passes through them. Some scholars think that the *kahrez* system was introduced from Iran during the Ch'in dynasty; on the other hand, a *Han-shu* chapter on irrigation records that during the Han dynasty there were already 'irrigation channels with wells' in Shaanxi, of a type found in the *kahrez* system. Perhaps we may therefore presume that the *kahrez* system of an 'irrigation channel with wells' was introduced there by the *t'un-t'ien* agricultural colonies during the Western Han period.[25]

Another important measure implemented by the garrison troops in the Western Regions during the Han dynasty was the construction of a system of fortifications and beacon towers – a warning system in case of a Hsiung-nu attack. Each fort consisted of a small square encampment of rammed earth, surrounded by walls, within which stood a small building. In one corner was a rammed-earth watch-tower more than 10 m high. On top was a lever device holding a basket of firewood. The sentry on top of the watch-tower could observe enemy movements and send a warning signal – smoke by day and open fire by

[24] Ma, 1975, pp. 29–30.
[25] Huang Wenbi, n.d.*b*, p.89.

night. This signalling system could transmit messages in a very short time and get news to Chang-an, the capital, within the same day. Each *sui* (beacon fire) or *t'ing* (watch-tower) had its own name and number. The beacon network of the Western Regions began from Yü-men (the Jade Gate), west of Tun-huang, and passed through the desert and along the northern bank of the Lop Nor directly to Kucha and Pai-cheng. Along this route remains of ancient beacons can be found. The example at Qizil, west of Kucha County, is relatively well preserved (Fig. 12).[26] Carved on a cliff at the foot of the Kelatagh, north-east of Pai-cheng County, an inscription dating from the fourth year of Yung-shou during the reign of Emperor Huan-ti of the Eastern Han(A.D. 158) records that Lieutenant-General Liu P'ing K'uo, on assuming office at Kucha, led six Chinese men to construct a series of watch-towers (Fig. 13).[27] At strategically important centres, there were also fortified barracks, such as the ruins of Lou-Ian and Tu-yin on the north-western bank of the Lop Nor at the site of the ancient city of Kao-ch'ang in the Turfan basin and the site of Pochengzi at Banjiegou in Jimsar, all strategic centres where Han troops were garrisoned. The eaves-end tiles with cloud pattern, excavated at Qitai, are typically Han in style (Fig. 14).

The Silk Route

The object of the Han in posting garrison troops, establishing farming colonies, and building fortifications and signal beacons was not simply to avert incursions by the Hsiung-nu; they also had an important role in safeguarding traffic on the Silk Route (see Map 5). This road played a key role in the history of civilization, facilitating economic and cultural exchanges between East and West. Geographical factors had to be overcome, especially the obstacles presented by the Taklamakan Desert. As is well known, there were two routes circumventing this impassable sea of sand. The southern route ran west from Tun-huang, along the southern bank of the Lop Nor to Tashkurgan. Ascending the Pamir plateau, it went through the Wakhan valley to Balkh (ancient Bactra). A branch to the west of Tashkurgan passed through Gandhāra. As the Taklamakan Desert has been spreading south, this section of ancient road, with the Walled City-States along it, has been submerged in sand. Only in modern times have archaeologists discovered the ruins of Niya and Endere and their important remains. The northern route, [28] also starting from Tun-huang, ran north-west through Sanlongsha to Lou-Ian on the north bank of the Lop Nor, passing Qarashahr and Aksu before turning south-west to Kashgar. From the Ferghana

[26] Ma, 1975, p. 37.
[27] Ma, 1980*a*.
[28] The new northnern route was opened up at the beginning of the Christian era according to the suggestion made by Hsü P'u, the Wu-chi colonel (see*Han-shu* 96).



FIG. 12. Remains of a Han beacon tower.

basin it made a detour around K'ang-chü, a region covering the Tashkent oasis and a part of the territory between the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya rivers (see Chapter 19) and turning south to join the southern route in Bactria. There were branches from K'ang-chü to Parthia and to the land between the Aral and Caspian Seas. Another road went northwest to Wu-sun, yet another going north from Lou-lan through Chü-shih close to Turfan, an extremely important strategic position. There was also a main line of communication connecting the northern and southern routes; and at the end of the Western Han period a new northern route was opened up giving direct access to Wu-sun.

Throughout the two Han dynasties, effective measures were taken to maintain and defend these important routes, using posthouses, sentry guards and interpreters to maintain communications between China and the West. When Emperor Wu-ti first sent Chang Ch'ien to the Yüeh-chih, the objective was a military one, but subsequently political and economic factors came to play the key role.

Before the Han established the post of protector-general of the Western Regions, there had been exchanges of diplomatic envoys who also served as merchants. Increasingly, traffic along the Silk Route flourished. Chinese silk products reached Parthia via the Walled City-States of the Western Regions and were sent on to Rome. Chinese silk soon became



FIG. 13. Rock inscription of Liu P’ing K’uo.



FIG. 14. Eaves-end tile with cloud design.

the most expensive luxury item in the Roman Empire and commanded high prices. But Han merchants were unable to overcome the monopoly of the Parthian middlemen and little Roman currency flowed into China. Virtually no Roman coins before the Byzantine period (*c.*A.D. 400) have been found in Xinjiang or China proper.[29]

[29] Finally we should allude to the question of the relations between the Western Regions and the Kushan Kingdom during the Han period. Many works by European scholars on Central Asian history have given incorrect accounts of this episode, believing that, at the end of the Eastern Han period, Kanishka, king of the Kushans, had once conquered part of the Tarim basin, at least as far as Shu-lê and khotan; some scholars have even gone as far as to include Turfan and the Lop Nor region in the Kushan Empire. This erroneous conclusion resulted merely from the incorrect interpretation of the Chinese historical records. In fact, the *Hou Han-shu* faithfully records events of the Western Regions from the later period of the Eastern Han epoch and also mentions contemporary Sino-Kushan relations.

11

THE KUSHANS*

B. N. Puri

Contents

THE rise of the empire of the Kushans is an important landmark in the history of Central Asia. Known to Chinese historians as Kuei-shuang,[1] they were one of the important tribes of the Great Yüeh-chih who had been driven out from their original homeland by another warring tribe, the Hsiung-nu (Huns) and had settled in northern Bactria (see Chapter 7).

The Early Kushans

The *Hou Han-shu* (Annals of the Later Han), compiled by Fan Yeh (*c.* A.D. 446), based mainly on the report submitted to the Chinese emperor by General Pan Yung in or before

[*] See Map 4.
[1] Pulleyblank, 1962, pp. 206 et seq.

A.D. 125, describes their rise. Ch'iu-chiu-ch'üeh (Kujula Kadphises), the *yabghu* of Kuei-shuang, attacked and destroyed the other four *yabghu* and made himself King of the Yüeh-chih. He attacked An-hsi (Parthia) and took the territory of Kao-fu (Kabul). He alsooverthrew P'u-ta (Puṣkalāvatī) and Chi-pin (Kashmir) and annexed these countries.[2] It was argued by Jitzuzo that the five *yabghu* already existed in Bactria when the Yüeh-chih arrived, and so the Kushans could not have been the Yüeh-chih. Some scholars, therefore, refer to the Saka-Kushans in the Yüeh-chih hoard.[3] But Tarn[4] regards this theory as an unhappy offshoot of an elementary blunder that started the belief in a Saka conquest of Graeco-Bactria; most scholars now agree that the *Hou Han-shu* gives an authentic account that is trustworthy. The chronology, however, of these events relating to the rise and consolidation of the Kingdom of Kuei-shuang is disputed because it is closely related to the history of the Great Kushans and the date of Kanishka. excavations at Taxila and elsewhere have conclusively settled the old argument as to whether the Kadphises preceded the Kanishka group of kings[5] as coins of the Kadphises group, but not of Kanishka, Huvishka, etc., are found in the Early Kushan levels of Sirkap. The *Hou Han-shu* further informs us that Ch'iu-chiu-ch'üeh (Kujula Kadphises) died at an age of more than 80 and was succeeded by his son Yen-kao-chen (Vima Kadphises), who in turn destroyed T'ien-chu (India) and placed a general there to control it. The Chinese annals seem to provide a *terminus ante quem* for the Kadphises rulers of A.D. 125, the date of Pan Yung's report.

Two series of dated inscriptions provide a more precise chronological framework for the rise of the Early Kushans. The first series bears a sequence of dates, some of which are qualified by *Ayasa* ('in the era of Azes') (see Chapter 8). The Takht-i Bahi inscription of the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares is dated in the twenty-sixth year of his reign and Year 103 of the era.[6] Its reference to *erjhuna kapa* suggests the presence of Kujula Kadphises as a prince at the court of the Indo-Parthian king. The Panjtar stone inscription dated Year 122 of the era, nineteen years later, [7] is dated in the reign of an unnamed king described as the *Guṣana mahārāja*. This same term '*Guṣana*' occurs in the Manikyala inscription of the time of Kanishka[8] which describes Lala as *Guṣaṇava-śasaṃvardhaka*, 'the increaser of the Kushan race'. '*Guṣana'* therefore stands for '*Kuṣana*'. The Taxila silver-scroll inscription of Year 136 *Ayasa* – of the era of Azes – gives as ruler an unnamed king, 'the Great King, the King of Kings, the Son of Heaven, the Kushan'. The nameless king with high titles has

2 Pulleyblank, 1968, pp. 247–58; Zürcher, 1968, pp. 346–90.
3 Maenchen-Helfen, 1945, pp. 71–81; Puri, 1965, pp. 1 et seq.
4 Tarn, 1951, p. 287.
5 Marshall, 1951.
6 Konow, 1929, pp. 57–62.
7 Ibid., pp. 67–70.
8 Ibid., pp. 145–50.

the same context as the nameless king of the Early Kushan coins struck with the titles of the King of Kings, the Great, the Saviour, which can now be placed after the coinage of Gondophares and the local issues of Kujula, but before the standard uniform coinage of Vima Kadphises.[9] It is clear that the prince of the Takht-i Bahi inscription in Year 103 and the ruler of the Panjtar stone inscription in Year 122 has extended his empire substantially by the time of the Taxila silver-scroll inscription in Year 136 and adopted high-sounding titles. The sequence of events clearly suggests that the three inscriptions refer to the same person, who belongs to the period before the New Era was introduced by Kanishka; and that the nameless king of both the coins and these inscriptions represents the later stages of the rule of Kujula Kadphises after he had captured P'u-ta (Puṣkalāvatī) and Chi-pin (Kashmir). Kujula Kadphises is said to have lived for more than eighty years. He played the key role in establishing the Kushan Empire and his coins are very numerous in the finds from the Early Kushan city of Sirkap.

If the credibility of the Khalatse inscription[10] is accepted, identifying Uvima Kavthisa with Vima Kadphises, then the octogenarian father Kujula Kadphises should be assigned a long reign of about fifty years, terminating somewhere between Years 160 and 165 of this era, with a reign of twenty to thirty years for Vima Kadphises, his son. It is now generally accepted that this era of Azes (*Ayasa*) may well have begun at the same time as the Vikrama era of 58 B.C. (see Chapter 8). The dates assigned, then, to Kujula Kadphises would include A.D. 45 (Takht-i Bahi), A.D. 64 (Panjtar) and A.D. 78 (Taxila silver scroll), and the dates of Vima Kadphises would include A.D. 127 (Khalatse).

The second series of dated inscriptions includes the Taxila silver vase of Jihoṇika the satrap dated Year 191.[11] This used to be attributed to the series of dates in the Azes era, but MacDowall[12] has shown that Jihoṇika's context falls after the reign of Azes II and before Kujula Kadphises in the decade A.D. 30–40, and the date must therefore be attributed to an Indo-Bactrian era.[13] The trilingual inscription at Dasht-i Nawur of Vima Kadphises is dated Year 279.[14] The unfinished inscription from Surkh Kotal of Kanishka Is dated Year 279[15] and that of Kadphises is dated Year 299.[16] Both these inscriptions, as the Taxila silver-vase inscription of Jihoṇika, belong to the same Graeco-Bactrian era, probably the era of Eucratides beginning with his accession around 170 B.C. (see Chapter 17). The dates

9 MacDowall, 1968*b*, pp. 28–48.
10 Konow, 1929, pp. 79–81.
11 Ibid., pp. 81–2.
12 MacDowall, 1973, pp. 215–30.
13 Tarn, 1951, pp. 494–502; Bivar, 1963, pp. 489 et seq.
14 Fussman, 1974, pp. 8–22.
15 Bivar, 1963, pp. 498–502.
16 Harmatta, 1965, pp. 164–95.

then assigned to Vima Kadphises would include A.D. 109 (Dasht-i Nawur) and 129 (Surkh Kotal).

Some scholars associate Kanishka with the Saka era of A.D. 78 and consequently have to place Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises before that date. To maintain consistency they have to find earlier reference dates for the two eras. For example, Fussman[17] links Year 279 with a Graeco-Bactrian era of independence from the Seleucids in 247 B.C. to give dates of A.D. 32 and 52 for Vima Kadphises. The problems surrounding Kanishka's dating call for detailed consideration.

The date of Kanishka

The date of Kanishka does not stand in isolation. In his time the Kushan Empire covered a vast amount of territory from Bactria to Benares and from Kashmir to Sind, and Kushan coins have also been found in recent excavations in Chorasmia, Khotan and eastern Iran. There is now substantial agreement on most points concerning the relative chronology of the Kushans, but the absolute date of the reference point for the era of Kanishka remains hotly disputed. It is now agreed that it cannot have been the Vikrama era of 58 B.C. which was proposed by Fleet and Kennedy.[18] But the dates advocated still range from A.D. 78 (the Saka era), which is still supported by many Indian scholars, to A.D. 278, once proposed by Bhandarkar[19] and Majumdar[20] and now supported by Zeimal.[21]

The consideration of any of the dates proposed must be fully reconciled with other established historical sequences of which the absolute dating is firmly established, in particular the Guptas and Western Satraps. The establishment of the Imperial Gupta dynasty by Candragupta in A.D. 319, and the intervening kingdoms and republican states that came from the Kushan dynasty and before the Guptas in India – the Nāgas, Yaudheyas, Mālavas, Arjunayanas, Kunindas and Madras – provide a firm *terminus ante quem* for the Kushan dynasty in Indian history. The context of the Western Satrap Rudradāman and his occupation of Sind, Sauvira and Malwa before Saka Year 72 (A.D. 150) in the Junagadh inscription[22] cannot be disputed, nor can his independent status be questioned. He claims in this inscription that he had personally acquired the status of *mahākṣatrapa* through his own prowess and strength.[23] If Kanishka Is taken to be the founder of the Saka era of

17 Fussman, 1974.
18 Vallée Poussin, 1930, pp. 346 et seq.
19 Ibid.
20 Majumdar, 1968, pp. 150 et seq.
21 Zeimal, 1974, pp. 292 et seq.
22 Kielhorn, 1905/06, pp. 36 et seq.
23 Raychaudhuri, 1953, pp. 424 et seq.

A.D. 78, the dates of his successors Huvishka and Vāsudeva would clash with those of Rudradāman, and it cannot be proved that Rudradāman or his family were ever subordinate to the Kushans.

Another fixed date that must be considered is the dispatch by Po-t'iao, King of the Great Yüeh-chih, of an envoy with tribute to the Wei as a token of his affection, on the day Kuei-mao (26 January) A.D. 230 (*San-kuo-chih*, 'Memoirs of the Three Kingdoms', 3.6a).

Po-t'iao has been identified with Vāsudeva.[24] Advocates of a date in the second century for the era of Kanishka identify him with Vāsudeva I, while those arguing for the A.D. 78 date regard him as later ruler, Vāsudeva II. Ghirshman[25] dates the era of Kanishka to A.D. 144 because of his excavations at Begram and the evidence of the trilingual inscription of the Sasanian emperor Shapur I at Naqsh-i Rustam. The Begram excavations suggest three chronological stages. The first phase predates Kanishka, yielding coins of Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises along with those of the Indo-Greek and Scytho-Parthian rulers. The second phase contains coins of Kanishka, Huvishka and Vāsudeva, and ends with a major destruction that Ghirshman associates with the conquests of Shapur I. He argues that the conquests of Shapur I provide the terminating point of the second dynasty of the Kushans, and that Shapur's conquest should be placed between his accession in A.D. 241 and his second war against the Romans (A.D. 251–52). The latest coins found in the city of Begram were those of Vāsudeva, the Po-t'iao of the Chinese *San-kuo-chih* and the same person as Vehsadjan, King of the Kushans, mentioned by the Armenian Moses of Khorene. However interpreted, the Sasanian conquest of the western Kushan provinces is a further fixed point which must be considered. Shapur I's inscription on the Ka^{c}be of Zoroaster at Naqsh-i Rustam claims to have incorporated the Kingdom of the Kushans up to Peshawar in the Sasanian Empire.[26] The inscription does not mention the date of the destruction of the Kushans leading to this. In fact, it only records the inclusion of part of the Kushan Empire, which could be the result of a conquest either by Ardashir or by Shapur I and which could have taken place at any time between A.D. 223 and 262. Narain[27] argues that Ghirshman's date for the destruction of Begram II (based on two hypotheses – finds of eight poor coins of Vāsudeva I and Shapur's eastern campaign) stands unproved; he claims the numismatic evidence goes clearly against any classification of the Kushans into three dynasties, and argues for an intermediate date of A.D. 103 for the accession of Kanishka.

[24] Zürcher, 1968, p. 371.
[25] Ghirshman, 1946.
[26] Maricq, 1958*b*, pp. 295–360.
[27] Narain, 1968, pp. 206–39.

Pulleyblank[28] supports Ghirshman's date of A.D. 144 from other evidence. LateBuddhist traditions connect Kanishka with Khotan and there is strong circumstantial evidence for Kushan penetration into the Tarim basin from the use of north-west Indian Prakrit as an administrative language, and from the finds of copper coins of Kanishka at Khotan. Pulleyblank argued that there could not have been any Kushan invasion before A.D. 175. Göbl[29] initially supported this chronology of A.D. 144 with an analysis of Kushan coin types which, he argued, were copied from Roman coins – Vima drawing from Trajan, Kanishka from Hadrian and Huvishka from Antonius Pius. But later Göbl[30] changed his view to A.D. 232 from a linkage he found between the Sasanian gold coinage of Shapur II struck at Merv and the Kushano-Sasanian coinage of Hormizd I at the beginning of the Kushano-Sasanian series. Majumdar[31] drew attention to similarities between Kushan and Early Gupta forms in iconography and palaeography, and connected Kanishka's accession with the beginning of the well-known era of A.D. 248/49. Zeimal[32] went further and suggested A.D. 278. Endorsing Bhandarkar's 1899 suggestion that the beginning of the era should be equated with the Saka era of A.D. 78, he regarded Kanishka's era as the third century, from A.D. 278. But any of these late dates placing the Great Kushans (the dynasty of Kanishka) in the third/fourth centuries A.D. would involve a clash not only with the Guptas but also with several other tribes ruling independently between the Later Kushans and the Imperial Guptas.[33]

Many scholars have identified the accession of Kanishka with the Saka era of A.D. 78. Rapson[34] argued that the date on the coins and inscriptions of the Western Satraps of Surashtra and Malwa should start in Kanishka's reign in A.D. 78, but because of its long use by the Saka Western Satraps it became known in India as the Saka era, which effectively disguised its origin and perplexed modern scholars. Tolstov[35] found an era of A.D. 78 used in Chorasmia. Basham[36] also noted that the era of A.D. 78 was used by the Magha kings of Kauśambi and was equated with the Licchavi era used in Nepal; he argued that such wide use of an era was only possible with the patronage of a great power, which could only be the Kushans. But the difficulties in reconciling the presence of Rudradāman (the powerful Western Satrap), who was independent of the Kushans, campaigning against

28 Pulleyblank, 1968, pp. 247 et seq.
29 Göbl, 1960, pp. 75–91; 1968, pp. 103–13.
30 Göbl, 1984, p. 52, 82.
31 Majumdar, 1968, pp. 150 et seq.
32 Zeimal, 1974, pp. 292–301.
33 Fleet, 1892, pp. 1 et seq.
34 Rapson, 1922, p. 585.
35 Tolstov, 1968, pp. 304–26.
36 Basham, 1968, pp. XII–XIII.

the Yaudheyas, in the lower Indus and Malwa between A.D. 130 and 150, in territory that was part of the fully established Kushan Empire, led Puri[37] to suggest that the era of Kanishka might have started around A.D. 142. A date in the early second century A.D. certainly seems to fit better the evidence of associated Kushan and Roman coin finds[38] and the careful analysis of events under Shapur I by Harmatta, [39] but the issue still remains open, awaiting new evidence and an analytical reconstruction that adequately explains and takes full cognizance of the fixed points of externally dated events.

The Great Kushans

The chronological framework of the dynasty of the Great Kushans is provided by the series of inscriptions dated in the era of Kanishka. Inscriptions are known of Kanishka dated Years 1–23, of Vasishka dated Years 24 and 28, of Huvishka dated Years 28–60 and of Vāsudeva dated Years 67–98.[40] There is another inscription of Year 41 from Ara of a Kanishka, son of Vajheshka, with the titles '*mahārāja rājatirāja devaputra*' and '*Kaisara*'. Year 41 falls in the middle of the reign of Huvishka. Smith, Puri and Banerji[41] identified him with the Great Kanishka and suggested that with advancing years and pressure of military affairs in Central Asia, Kanishka had left his son Vasishka as viceroy in India. Vasishka predeceased his father and was replaced by his brother Huvishka. But it could as well be proposed that this Kanishka was another ruler who held the western part of the Kushan Empire in Year 41, perhaps a brother of Huvishka associated with him in power or a member of a collateral branch who usurped power for a time in part of the empire. There are several other possibilities such as the division of the empire between two brothers, Vasishka and Huvishka, on Kanishka's death, with a second Kanishka succeeding his father and finally becoming sole Kushan emperor.[42] But there is another possibility, that both Vasishka and his son Kanishka belong to a separate group of kings after the Great Kushans (Kanishka, Huvishka and Vāsudeva).

There is also a reference to another Kushan ruler, Vaskushana, in an inscription[43] dated Year 22 from Sanchi. He could not have ruled independently in this area when Kanishka was alive. It is, therefore, tempting to identify this Vaskushana with Vasishka. While a king called Vasishka is not known in the coin series of the Great Kushans, a king of this name is

37 Puri, 1965.
38 MacDowall, 1968*a*, pp. 134–54.
39 Harmatta, 1965, pp. 186 et seq.
40 Puri, 1965, 1977, pp. 101–61; Janert, 1961.
41 Smith, 1924, p. 286; Puri, 1977, pp. 159–60; Banerji, 1908, pp. 58 et seq.
42 Konow, 1929, p. 163.
43 Marshall and Foucher, 1947, Vol. I, p. 386; Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 1949, p. 314.

TABLE 1. Chronological framework of rulers

Rulers	Era dates			
	Graeco-Bactrian	Azes	Kanishka	Later Kushans
Sakas				
Jihoṇika the satrap	191			
Early Kushans				
Kujula Kadphises		103		
Nameless king		122 and 136		
Vima Kadphises	279[1]	184(7)		
Great Kushans				
Kanishka			1–23	
Huvishka			28-60	
Vāsudeva			67–99	
Later Kushans				
Kanishka II				14
Vasishka				20, 22, 24, 28
Kanishka III				31, 41

The date is read as 285 by Marien and 299 by Harmatta.

known in the coinage of the Later Kushans after Vāsudeva.[44] It can therefore be suggested that Vaskushana, a Kushan *mahārāja* in Year 22 and the Kanishka of the Ara inscription in Year 41, belong to the period after the century of the Great Kushans. These Later Kushan rulers would include both Vasishka and his son Kanishka, and perhaps another Kanishka known from the Mathura inscription of Year 14 which on palaeographic grounds comes closer to the Gupta period.[45] Such a chronological framework can cut the Gordian knot created by the Ara inscription; the Kanishka In the Surkh Kotal inscription dated Year 31[46] seems to be the same Late Kushan ruler.

In the light of these inscriptions, Table 1 sets out a chronological framework of the Early, Great and Later Kushan rulers. The last ruler, Kanishka, may then have been a contemporary of the later Indian dynasties preceding the Early Guptas. There is clearly a second era of the Later Kushans in the inscriptions from Mathura, and evidence for a Later Kushan era starting in A.D. 234 and used on coins of Tekin Shah, King of Udabhāṇḍapura, and the Tochi valley inscriptions. This has led some scholars (Harmatta, Humbach, MacDowall) to place the beginning of the Kanishka era itself in A.D. 134, a century before the commencement of the second Kushan era.

[44] Göbl, 1984, pp. 58–78.
[45] Puri, 1965, pp. 70 et seq.
[46] Maricq, 1958*a*, pp. 345 et seq.

Relations with Iran

Kujula Kadphises is mentioned as a prince (*erjhuna Kapa*) at the court of the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares in the Takht-i Bahi inscription of Year 103 (A.D. 45). According to the *Hou Han-shu*, Kujula is said to have attacked An-hsi (Parthia) and taken the territory of Kao-fu (Kabul). It is difficult to explain the presence of a Kushan prince at the Indo-Parthian court in Taxila, but it is clear that eventually Kujula Kadphises reconquered the province of Kāpiśa and Kabul from the Indo-Parthians and then captured the Indus provinces of the Indo-Parthians, including Taxila, from the successors of Gondophares.[47] Vima Kadphises (Fig. 1) seems to have profited from the weakness of the Indo-Parthians to seize all the Indus valley up to Sind. At the height of their power under Kanishka, the Kushans did not seem to be interested in territorial gains at the expense of their neighbours, the Parthians. Buddhist tradition refers to a war by Kanishka against the Parthians and according to Ghirshman[48] it might have taken place in the reign of Vologases III, probably occasioned by a Parthian attempt to recover some of the Iranian provinces captured by the Kushans from the Indo-Parthians.



FIG. 1. Statue of Vima Kadphises sitting on a lion throne. Mathura.

[47] Banerjea, 1957.
[48] Ghirshman, 1978, p. 262.

The ascendancy of the Kushans posed a continuing threat to Parthia's easternboundary. Eventually the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, Ardashir attacked the Kushans and conquered Margiana, Carmania and Sistan.[49] Tabari says that the kings of the Kushans, of Turan and of Makran submitted without battle to Ardashir and kept their territories as vassals.[50] Ardashir's successor Shapur I, claims among his provinces Sind and the country of the Kushans up to Peshawar in his inscription in the Ka^{c}be of Zoroaster.[51] The Kushan dynasty of Kanishka was deposed and replaced in the north by another line of Kushano- Sasanian princes ruling a considerably reduced kingdom, and recognizing the suzerainty of the Sasanians, at least for a time. There was a serious revolt in the eastern Sasanian provinces in the time of Bahram II (A.D. 276–93), when the king's brother, who was viceroy in Sistan, attempted to seize the throne, and the Kushan king supported him. Peace was restored with the marriage of Hormizd II, son and successor of Narseh (A.D. 303–09), to a Kushan princess.[52] The death of Hormizd II left a minor, Shapur II, on the Sasanian throne. The Kushans took advantage of this, and the internal disorders in Iran, to recover the lost territory, but Shapur II, on attaining his majority, waged a new war against the Kushans and decisively defeated them.

Relations with China

The *Hou Han-shu* provides information only about the Kadphises rulers and refers to the failure of a Kushan army sent against the Chinese general Pan Ch'ao. The Chinese general's successful policy in Central Asia coincided with the Kushan conquest of northern India and led to a conflict of interest with the political aspirations of Vima Kadphises (see Chapter 10).

Rivalry between the Kushans and the Chinese in Central Asia seems to have continued up to the time of Vāsudeva. The Chinese work, the *San-kuo-chih*, compiled by Ch'en Shou (A.D. 233–97), records that the King of the Great Yüeh-chih, Po-t'iao, sent an envoy with tribute to China and was given the honorary title of 'King of the Yüeh-chih who shows affection towards the Wei'. Po-t'iao has been identified with Vāsudeva, either Vāsudeva I or Vāsudeva II, depending on the chronology favoured by the scholar concerned.

49 Ghirshman, 1946, pp. 100 et seq.; Narain, 1968, pp. 211–12.
50 Maricq, 1968, pp. 182–4.
51 Maricq, 1958*b*, pp. 295–360.
52 Ghirshman, 1978, p. 296.

Relations with Rome

According to Dio Cassius[53] many embassies came to Augustus, and the Indians,having previously proclaimed a treaty of alliance, concluded it with the presentation of gifts including tigers, animals that the Romans saw for the first time. Florus, writing in the time of Trajan (A.D. 98–117), [54] refers to the arrival in Rome of several embassies, especially from the Indians. Political relations, seen in the dispatch of embassies, seem to be connected with trade contacts and commercial transactions related to the silk trade. Some of the copper coins of Kujula Kadphises have an obverse head closely copied from the portraits on the Julio-Claudian silver denarii of Augustus and Tiberius, and show the Kushan emperor sitting on a curule chair which appears on the reverse of Roman coins of Claudius and may well represent a gift from a Roman emperor. Roman aurei and denarii were used extensively in Roman sea trade with India, which traded in silk and spices. Pliny (*Natural History* XII.10.41) refers to the serious drain of Roman coins exported to India. The gold coinage introduced by Vima Kadphises used a gold dinar that copied the weight standard of the Roman gold aureus, [55] and the impact of Graeco-Roman art in Gandhāra sheds light on the cultural and commercial relations between the Kushan Empire and the Roman world.

Relations with north-eastern India

The extension of the Kushan Empire in northern India seems to have been the achievement of Kanishka (Fig. 2), whose inscriptions are found at Mathura, Kauśambi and Sarnath. The distribution of copper Kushan coins of Kanishka and Huvishka extends as far as Patna and Gaya in eastern India.[56] The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* and the *Hou Han-shu* show Kanishka's hold over Kashmir and parts of central and south-western India.[57] The reference in the *Śridharmapiṭakanidānasūtra* to the defeat of the King of Pāṭaliputra, when Kanishka demanded a large indemnity but agreed to accept Aśvaghoṣa, the Buddha's alms bowl and a compassionate cock, confirms Kushan activities in north-east India.

After Huvishka, the Kushans lost some more distant territories in eastern India, but Mathura long remained under Kushan rule. The long series of inscriptions found there continues up to Year 57 of the second Kushan era under the Later Kushans, [58] and it has been thought that Mathura was a second capital of the Kushans for the eastern region

53 McCrindle, 1901, p. 212.
54 Ibid., p. 213.
55 Sewell, 1904, p. 591; MacDowall, 1960, pp. 63 et seq.
56 Majumdar, 1932, pp. 127 et seq.; Banerji, 1951, pp. 107 et seq.; Gupta, 1953, pp. 185 et seq.
57 Thomas, 1935.
58 Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 270–3.



FIG. 2. Statue of Kanishka I. Mathura.

(Fig. 3). The appointment of satraps for Mathura, as at Sarnath, points to a determined control over the region. Huvishka's reign was a period of political security and economic prosperity. The extensive range of gold coins of Huvishka, retaining a good weight standard and high gold purity, suggests economic stability closely associated with political stability. Vāsudeva's long rule of more than thirty years was equally characterized by political stability at home. After Vāsudeva, the Kushans lost more territory to a series of new dynasties and republican states.

Relations with the Saka satraps

It has been suggested by some scholars[59] that the Kushans had a radical affinity with the Sakas and were a Saka clan. The term 'Saka' has been used in a very imprecise way, and it is possible that the Kushans may have been the descendants of some of the Sakas

[59] Maenchen-Helfen, 1945, pp. 71 et seq.



FIG. 3. Statue of sitting Buddha from the Kushan age. Mathura.

mentioned by Herodotus. According to the *Kālakācaryakathānaka*,[60] the Sakas of the Indus conquered Surashtra and Malwa shortly before the beginning of the Vikrama era (57 B.C.), but were ousted by Vikramāditya. After a lapse of 135 years (*c*. A.D. 78) a new Saka came and reestablished the Saka dominion there. It has been suggested that the second conquest was associated with Vima Kadphises and his satraps ruled as the Saka satraps of western India, without any regal appellation like *mahārāja*. But they also used the title of *mahākṣatrapa* which could mean either the attainment of independence or promotion in the administrative hierarchy. The expression '*svayamadhigata mahākṣatrapa nāmaḥ*' in the Junagadh inscription[61] of Rudra-dāman is especially significant. While there is no specific evidence that the Saka satraps of western India ever owed allegiance to Vima Kadphises, circumstantial evidence, as also that adduced by the *Hou Han-shu*, suggests his

[60] Jacobi, 1880, pp. 247 et seq.; Konow, 1929 pp. XXVI–XXVIII.
[61] *Epigraphica Indica*, p. 82.

conquest of Sind or the Indus region and his association with the Saka satraps who used the Saka era, probably founded by their overlord, in their records.

The Kushans held the lower Indus valley. An inscription of Kanishka Year 11 was found at Sui Vihar near Bahawalpur, and there have been finds of Later Kushan coins from the stupa site at Mohenjo-daro[62] and at Jhukar, about 30 km to the north.[63] The find of potsherds with Kharoṣṭhī lettering at Tor Dheri in the Loralai District of Baluchistan[64] may suggest an expansion of Kushan power in that region. But Kushan rule in Sind and Sauvira (modern Multan) seems to conflict with the claims of the Western Satrap Rudradāman, recorded in his Junagadh inscription of A.D. 150. This could be reconciled if we presume that he was a satrap of Kanishka, for which there is no evidence, or that he preceded Kanishka, which seems more probable (see discussion on the date of Kanishka above).

The Kushan political system

The divinity of kingship seems to have been the most conspicuous element in the Kushan political system. Their kings were not only accorded the title of '*devaputra*'[65] (Son of God), corresponding to the Chinese imperial title '*t'ien-tzŭ*' (Son of Heaven), but were deified after death and their statues were set up in a *devakula* (god house). Such statues of Kushan rulers have been recovered from excavations at Mat, near Mathura, and from Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan. It is probable that the statue of the deified Huvishka was erected in the lifetime of the ruler.[66] The Kushan rulers were secularist in one sense, in that they depicted divinities from different pantheons on their coins, but religion and polity were interlinked. The Mat inscription of Huvishka[67] refers to him as 'steadfast in the true law', a title also borne by the first Kushan king, Kujula Kadphises on his coins. It is further recorded that on account of his devotion, the kingdom was conferred on the grand father of Huvishka by Sarva (which is another name for the god Śiva) and Candavira (a name connected with the moon).

The Kushan kings assumed high-sounding titles[68] borrowed, like the divinities on their coins, from different regions and civilizations. They use the Indian titulature '*mahārāja rājatirāja*' (Great King, the King of Kings), its Iranian counterpart '*ṣaonano ṣao*' and its Greek counterpart '*Basileus Basileon*' (Fig. 4). These titles, no doubt, indicate Kushan

[62] Marshall, 1932, p. 127.
[63] Majumdar, 1934, p. 7.
[64] Konow, 1929, pp. 173–7.
[65] Thomas, 1935 pp. 97 et seq.; Sharma, 1959, p. 177.
[66] Janert, 1961, p. 145.
[67] Ibid., p. 144.
[68] Puri, 1939/40, pp. 433–41.



FIG. 4. Coin of Kanishka I with Greek legend and the title ‘*Basileus Basileon*’

paramountcy over areas where lesser princes and feudal lords retained local power. In the Ara inscription, the Later Kanishka also has the title ‘*Kaisara*’, the equivalent of ‘Caesar’ used by Roman emperors, suggesting Kushan contact with Rome and a claim to comparable status. Some titles were borrowed from their Bactrian, Saka and Indo-Parthian predecessors. It has been suggested that they also inherited a system of joint rule, but there is no numismatic evidence for this. No Kushan coin portrays two rulers. The argument for supposed joint rule is based on inscriptions that seem to show kings with overlapping dates: an inscription of ‘*Vaskuṣāna*’ (identified with Vasishka) from Sanchi with the title ‘*rāja*’ dated Year 22 when Kanishka was king and the Ara inscription dated Year 41 when Huvishka was king. But both these inscriptions are dated in the Later Kushan era. There is consequently no overlapping, and the dual kingship known in the Indo-Parthian political system does not seems to have been practised under the Kushans.[69]

[69] Puri, 1965, pp. 79–87.

Kushan administration

The vast Kushan Empire, extending from Central Asia to Bihar and from Kashmir to Sind, containing peoples of different nationalities and religions with a heterogeneous socio-economic background, was governed through an organized administrative system, probably in three tiers, at central, provincial and local levels. The king seems to have possessed unfettered powers, as we find no reference in the Kushan records to any advisory body or to councillors corresponding to *amātyas* and *sachivas* of the Mauryan period. The Kushans seem to have followed the earlier existing pattern of the Indo-Greeks and Parthians by appointing *kṣatrapas* and *mahākṣatrapas* for different units of the empire. Inscriptions provide the names of some such *kṣatrapas* some foreign, like Vanaspara, and the *mahākṣatrapa* Kharapallāna at Varanasi, Naṃda at Mathura, Veśpasi and Lala, a scion of the Kushan family, Liaka, and an unknown satrap, son of the satrap Graṇavhryaka at Kāpiśa (Begram). Some inscriptions show that certain appointments were hereditary.

They mention other officials performing both civil and military functions, called '*daṇḍanāyaka*' and '*mahādaṇḍanāyaka*'. The two terms are found in numerous inscriptions throughout India, suggesting the prevalence of this feudal element – as one might presume – in the administrative set-up of different ruling families over a considerable period of time. They were charged with administrative and military responsibilities in different areas. The *daṇḍanāyaka* was presumably the wielder of the rod (*daṇḍa*), acting both as commissioner of police to prevent crime and as a judge or criminal magistrate administering justice. He could also perform military functions although he is distinguished from the *senānī* or real commander. He is also differentiated from the *daṇḍapāśika* of the later records which probably signifies someone carrying fetters (*pāśa*).

The places where inscriptions mentioning satraps and other officials have been found indicate localities for which they were responsible. Satraps arc known for Kāpiśa (Begram), Manikyala (near Rawalpindi), Und (west of the Indus), Mathura, Varanasi, etc. There may have been satraps for other parts of the empire, but the evidence on this point is wanting. The relations between *kṣatrapas* and *daṇḍanāyakas* are no longer defined, but it may be assumed that *kṣatrapas* were definitely at a higher administrative level than the *daṇḍanāyakas*. The use of foreigners alone at the higher level of political organization ensured efficiency and minimized the chances of internal dissension and disorder, but this principle was not applied at local village level. The inscriptions mention two terms – '*grāmika*' and '*padrapāla*' – both signifying 'village headman', who collected the king's dues and took cognizance of crimes in his area. There is no information about the local government that we find later in the Gupta period.

The scanty information available suggests that the Kushan rulers accepted thepreva-lent Indian and Chinese concept of the divinity of kingship, and borrowed theAchaemenid and subsequently Indo-Grcek and Indo-Parthian system of appointing satraps as provincial governors, while the feudal lord (*daṇḍanāyaka*) was their own creation. The title is no doubt Indian, but all feudal lords known to have been associated with the Kushan administration were foreigners.

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ECONOMY AND SOCIAL SYSTEM IN CENTRAL ASIA IN THE KUSHAN AGE*

A. R. Mukhamedjanov

Contents

DURING the period of the Kushan Empire, great progress was made in the social andeconomic life of the peoples of Central Asia. The economic prosperity they enjoyed was due to a number of factors: (a) the unification of the greater part of Central Asia's ancient agricultural regions under the authority of a single empire; (b) the maintenance of political stability over long periods; (c) the rapid development of farming (with crop irrigation) and handicrafts; and (d) the expansion and strengthening of trade relations with India, China and the countries of the Near East. With the expansion of internal and international trade, and the development of economic relations in Central Asia, agriculture, which had already played a major role in the country's economic development, acquired even greater importance. In countries with inadequate rainfall, agriculture, the backbone of ancient civilizations, has always depended on artificial irrigation and many aspects of the social and

* See Maps 4, 5 and 6.

economic life of the peoples of Central Asia in the Kushan period are closely linked with irrigation as an element in agricultural production and general prosperity.

Irrigation

Archaeological evidence reveals intensive exploitation of new agricultural land and the expansion of agricultural oases at the beginning of the Christian era in the river valleys and ancient agricultural oasis areas of Central Asia, especially in the southern regions, even though the best and most suitable croplands were by that time already under cultivation. It has also been established that, with the opening up of new regions and the extension of crop-farming to the northern provinces of Central Asia on the lower reaches of the Zerafshan, on the middle reaches of the Syr Darya and in the Tashkent oasis, large numbers of nomadic livestock-breeders switched to a settled way of life and new centres of urban civilization were formed. As a result of the extensive development of irrigation networks, practically all the main provinces of Central Asia were brought under cultivation during this period and the establishment of the major crop-growing oases was completed. The extent to which northern Bactria was populated and brought under cultivation at this time can be judged from the 117 archaeological monuments of the Kushan period recorded in recent years in the territory of Surkhan Darya province.[1] A major channel, the Zang canal, leading from the Surkhan river, was constructed. In the zone irrigated by it a new oasis, the Angor, was established around the town of Zar-tepe.[2] The founding of Dalverzin-tepe as a major urban centre also dates back to this period. The Surkhan Darya and Sherabad Darya valleys, with their flourishing agricultural oases, fortified towns and extensive grazing lands, were able to provide a strong base for unifying the domains of the Yüeh-chih on the right bank of the Amu Darya. When they were unified by the ruler of Kuei-shuang, who subjugated the four other Yüeh-chih principalities, the nucleus of the Kushan Empire was formed.

This was the time when large-scale irrigation systems were developed in the Zerafshan and Kashka Darya valleys and the Tashkent oasis. The major irrigation works constructed in the Samarkand oasis and which carried water from the Zerafshan river were the Bulungur and Payarîk canals on the right bank, the Dargom and Narpai canals on the left bank, and the Ishtîkhan and Naukinsk systems in the Miyan-kala territory. Some of these extended over a distance of more than 100 km. In the Bukharan part of the Zerafshan valley, the river fed the Kanimekh (Kanimug), Kharkan Rud, Zandana and Ramitan Rud canals on the right

[1] Rtveladze and Pidaev, 1981.
[2] Masson, 1981.

bank, and the main canal, the Shah Rud (Rud-i Zar) and many others on the left bank.[3] As a result of the development of irrigation in the Zerafshan river valley, a vast area was supplied with water and brought under cultivation. According to our calculations, some 3,400–3,500 km^2 of land along the lower reaches of the Zerafshan alone were irrigated in the period from the first to the fourth century A.D. The western boundary of these ancient irrigated lands, which today passes through the sands of Kyzyl Kum, was then at certain points situated some tens of kilometres beyond the present-day limits of the Bukhara oasis.[4] Thus, during the Kushan period, practically the entire flood-plain of the Zerafshan valley was brought under cultivation, and the two large agricultural oases of Samarkand and Bukhara were established.

During the same period, a number of major irrigation systems – the Rudaksa Kasan, Faizabad, Nasaf-Denau, Kamashi and many other canals – were built along lower reaches of the Kashka Darya river. Many fortifications, settlements and farmsteads of the Late Kushan period were constructed in the vicinity of these canals, especially in the third and fourth centuries A.D. The establishment of ancient Nakhshab oasis and its centre, the town of Er-kurgan, was completed.[5] The oasis covered some 1,500–1,600 km^2.

The construction of the Salar-Karasu-Dzhun irrigation system in the second and first centuries B.C. gave impetus to the development of the agricultural oasis of ancient Tashkent. The origin of crop-raising on the territory of the Chirchik-Ahangaran basin dates back to an earlier period. However, as the Buzgon-tepe, Taukat-tepe, Kugait, Shash-tepe and other archaeological monuments located in the irrigation zone of the Salar-Karasu-Dzhun system show, the intensive application of irrigation in that region and the urbanization of a part of its settled area began at the dawn of the Christian era.[6] One characteristic feature of the establishment of the Tashkent agricultural oasis is the fact that all the lands comprised in it were not brought under cultivation at the same time. Priority was given to the use of water resources for irrigation areas which were most favoured by natural conditions and were, for the most part, situated in regions adjacent to the water supply.

Traces of irrigation systems of the Kushan period are found in the upper Zerafshan, Kafirnigan and Vakhsh river valleys in Tajikistan. The northern and western sectors of the Vakhsh valley were watered by the ancient Dzhuibar canal, which was built in the second and third centuries A.D. Remains of this canal, in the form of embankments 18 m wide

[3] Mukhamedjanov, 1978.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Kabanov, 1977, 1981.
[6] Buryakov and Filanovich, 1972.

and up to 2.5 m high, have survived in the region of Urtaboz, extending over a distance of 12 km.[7]

In the Kushan period, in the Ferghana valley, prior to the building of the main canals leading off the Syr Darya, one of the two great rivers of Central Asia, a complex offan-shaped irrigation systems providing water for individual agricultural oases wasestablished at the base of the Isfara, Sokh, Shahimardan (Margelan), Isfayram, Aravan and other mountain river gorges. At the head of each system there was usually a large fortress, which provided a vantage point from which the distribution of water could be strictly regulated. For example, the Sari-kurgan fortress stood at the head of the Sokh river system. Archaeological material indicates that the formation of complex multi-branch irrigation systems, the rapid expansion of irrigated areas and the emergence of a large number of fortified settlements in the Ferghana valley all took place in the first centuries A.D.[8]

The development of irrigation and the expansion of irrigated areas in Central Asiaduring the Kushan period have been thoroughly investigated along the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya where irrigation was practised in ancient times. During this period, entire networks of canals were built and brought into operation in Chorasmia. For example, major canals such as the Gaukhora, Toprak-kala (right-bank Chorasmia), Khaikhanik, Vadak and Buva canals, the left-bank canal originating in Daudan (left-bank Chorasmia) and many others were all built during this period. It was a time of considerable growth in the oases of the Bazar-kala and Guldursun canals, which were built as early as the fourth and third centuries B.C. A large branch canal which was built off the Toprak-kala canal irrigated the Sultan-Uizdag foothills. The fortress of Ayaz-kala was erected on the edge of the newly cultivated lands. Following the reinforcement of the Gaziabad-Chermenyab irrigation system, the Kandumkala and Kardarankhas fortresses were restored and new fortresses and towns built. These included the Zamakhshar (Izmukshir) fortress, Khiva, the Devkeskan fortress on Chink of the Ustyurt and many others.[9]

The discovery and detailed study of the remains of ancient irrigation systems along the lower reaches of the Amu Darya have shown that in the Kushan period Chorasmia had the most highly developed of all the ancient irrigation systems (Fig. 1). Progress in irrigation engineering took the form of improvements in the systems of water supply, and made changes in the section of the main canals. The archaic broad (20–40 m wide) and shallow canals were replaced during the period by narrower canals with deeper sections. At the same time the canals were considerably lengthened, and extended by many kilometres.

[7] Zeimal, 1971.
[8] Gulyamov, 1974.
[9] Gulyamov, 1957.

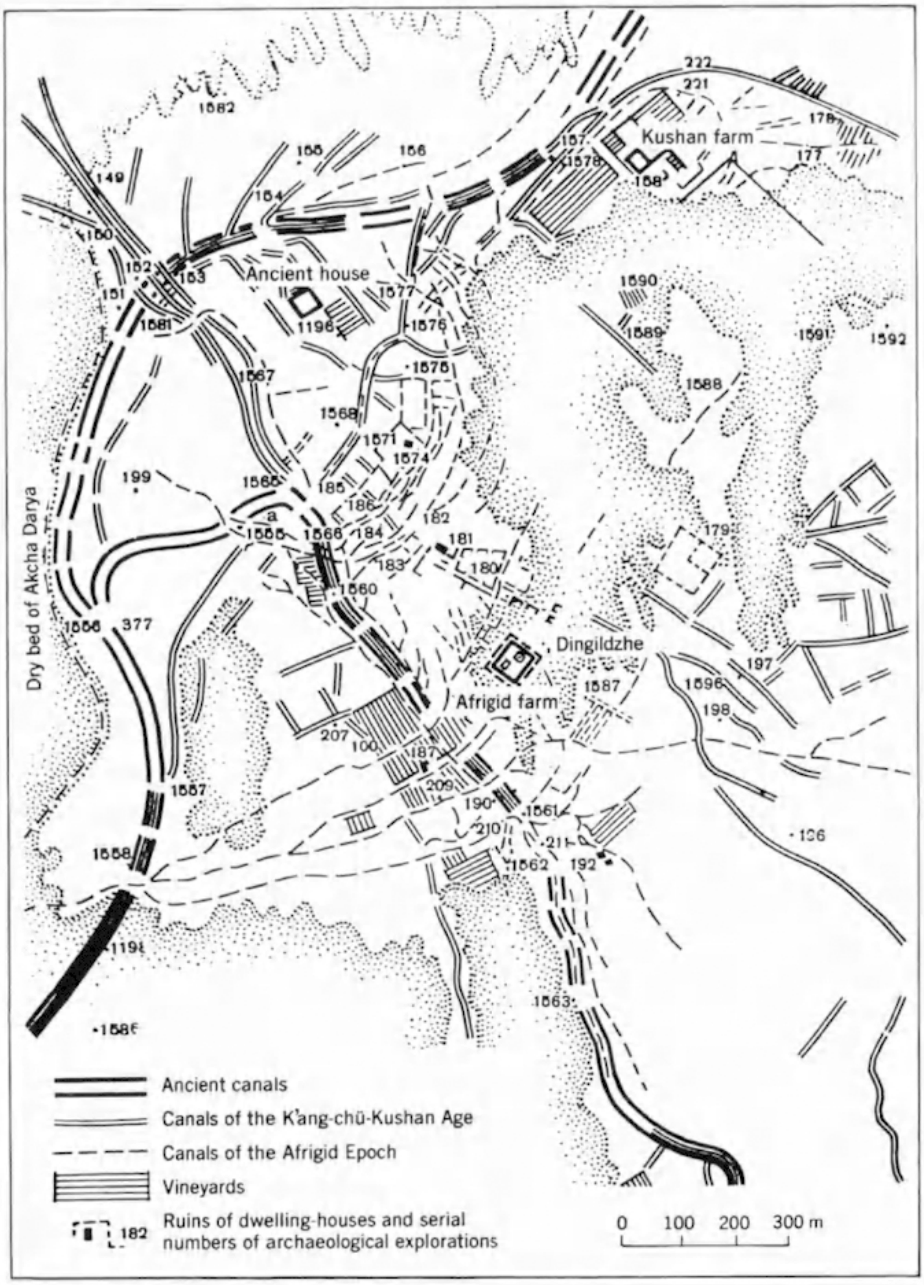


FIG. 1 Irrigation system of ancient Chorasmia. Canals in the environs of Dirgildzhe. (Courtesy of B. V. Andrianov.)

The number of smaller local systems was reduced and these were amalgamated with much larger irrigation systems, shifting the main water intake further upstream. The process of carrying water to the fields was improved and various water distribution devices were introduced. Irrigation was effected in accordance with a specific flow pattern: main river, head, main canal, distribution canal, irrigation canal and fields. The total length of one of the largest canals of the period, known as the ancient Kîrkkîz canal (right-bank Chorasmia),

was 90 km. It watered numerous fields for cultivation purposes. The surviving portions of a canal of the K'ang-chü period (fourth century B.C. to first century A.D.) measure as much as 20 m from bank to bank; those dating from the Kushan period (second and third centuries A.D.) measure only 10–11 m, but have steep sides and are much deeper. The creation and maintenance of major irrigation systems of this kind obviously called for extensive earth-moving operations, the installation of sophisticated structures at the head of the system and constant dredging to prevent silting up. It has been calculated that over 222 million m^3 of earth were removed in digging the Kîrkkîz canal, a task which took 15,000 labourers two months to complete. Some 6,000–7,000 labourers were used annually to keep the canal clear of silt and maintain it in working condition.[10] Deep central canals extending over long distances proved more helpful than the broad and shallow canals of ancient times. S. P. Tolstov, in his observations on the ancient irrigation works of Chorasmia, concluded that by late antiquity they had been completely rebuilt. The archaic and classical irrigation systems of the K'ang-chü period were in many respects superior to those that were fully developed in the Middle Ages.[11]

In the K'ang-chü–Kushan period, when irrigation systems reached their highest level of development, the area under irrigation along the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya totalled 35,000–38,000 km^2 (13,000 km^2 on the lower Amu Darya and 22,000–25,000 km^2 on the lower Syr Darya).[12] Thus, in antiquity, the land area under irrigation along the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya was four times greater than it is today. It must, however, be remembered that the land was not then as intensively irrigated as it is today. Although the main canals were of considerable size and length, the network of subsidiary irrigation canals was relatively small and, as a result, not more than 10–15 per cent of the land area, the irrigation zone, was directly used for crop-raising, in spite of the substantial supply of water.[13]

In addition to the extensive development that occurred in the alluvial zones of the major river valleys, the foothills and mountain regions of Central Asia were also brought under cultivation during the Kushan period, as a result of improvements in irrigation engineering and the accumulation of experience in irrigation. Since the water flow in the gorges of these regions was not abundant and the possibility of expanding the total area of irrigated land was limited, both groundwater and water from springs, which in those days were far more numerous, were used for irrigation in addition to the spring-thaw water from mountain streams. Depending on the hydrographic and geomorphologic features of each

[10] Andrianov, 1969.
[11] Tolstov, 1962.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Tolstov, 1969.

river valley and mountain region, different types of hydraulic works were developed. To store the limited water from mountain gorges and springs, small covered reservoirs were built inside a ravine or at the point where the gorge opened out from it. The techniques used for constructing these miniature reservoirs were very simple. The structures were either rectangular or oval in appearance, closely resembling the pens used for small livestock. Their sides were built of boulders packed with turf and they were located on the slopes of terraces above the flood-plain. They measured 50 × 40 m at most; the walls were up to 2 m high and 1–2 m wide. A reservoir usually had small openings in opposite walls. The upper opening was the intake and the lower one was the outlet for releasing the water into the irrigation network. The use of storage reservoirs for irrigation was typical of terraced agriculture, and in the Kushan period it was common practice in the upper Zerafshan valley and in the foothills of the Nuratau mountains. Along the northern slope of the Nuratau, at the points where streams emerge from their mountain gorges, fortified rural settlements have been identified and recorded, and around them remains of small ancient reservoirs with traces of terraced farming have been found. Archaeological evidence shows that small reservoirs with an average capacity of 1,000–1,200 m^3 of water, and terraced farming using those reservoirs, were introduced in the mountain regions of Central Asia during the first centuries of the Christian era.[14]

In mountain valleys where there were no sources of surface water, groundwater was widely used for irrigation. It was collected for this purpose in *kahrez* or underground reservoirs, consisting of horizontal water-bearing galleries (which required a great deal of manpower to bore) and a large number of vertical ventilation shafts. The remains of a number of abandoned ancient *kahrez* have been identified and studied in the region of Kopet Dag and Babadug, in the Vakhsh river valley and along the upper Zerafshan. Archaeological investigations have shown that underground irrigation reservoirs of this kind made it possible to bring under cultivation a large area of land in the foothills of the Nuratau region, and a small agricultural oasis was established at the edge of the Kyzyl Kum Desert. In this period the whole of the upper Zerafshan valley, as far as present-day Matcha, was converted to agricultural use.[15]

In rugged mountain terrain, it was especially difficult to select a site for the head of a canal to be fed by a mountain river flowing down a deep gorge, and to build a canal over land that was extensively broken by ravines. The major achievements of Kushan irrigation engineering included the boring of tunnel-like water-intake channels at the heads of main canals that emerged from the sheer rock sides of a mountain river, and the construction of

[14] Mukhamedjanov, 1975.
[15] Staviskiy, 1961.

aqueducts across ravines or gaps in mountain ridges. Remains of ancient engineering works of this kind have been identified along the upper Zerafshan, particularly in the locality of Ravatkhadzha, at the head of the Dargom canal, which was built outwards from the Zerafshan at the beginning of our era. In the Early Middle Ages this locality was known as Vargsar, meaning 'head of a dam'. Sogdian irrigation engineers chose this locality for the head of the Dargom canal for two reasons. In the first place, the Zerafshan river narrows here and is not more than 200 m wide, whereas upstream and downstream it is much wider – in some places even 2 km wide. Secondly, the river here has very hard banks and the left bank is a mass of conglomerate rising 15 m. It was of course impossible to build the opening section of the Dargom canal through the high solid banks of the Zerafshan, and so the ancient irrigation engineers chose instead to bore a tunnel with a number of water-intake openings and wells. One of the tunnel openings measuring 1.5 m in diameter still survives at a point slightly above the present-day Pervomaisky hydro-electric power station. The ancient tunnel section of the Dargom canal probably ran almost parallel to the bank. At a later period this section was eroded by the water passing through it and the ancient water-intake of the canal merged with the water-meadow of the Zerafshan river.[16] At this time also a small settlement was built in the locality of Vargsar, and it was probably here that the ancient superintendents of the headworks of the Dargom canal used to live. According to written sources, in the Early Middle Ages the inhabitants of Vargsar were required to keep watch on the Dargom canal dam as a labour duty, in exchange for which they were exempted from land taxes.[17] At that time, about 40,000 people lived in Vargsar, [18] which was always of major strategic importance as the main water-supply centre for the left-bank sector of the Samarkand oasis and as a point commanding the approaches to Samarkand. Whoever held Vargsar could deprive Samarkand of its water supply. In the political history of Samarkand, there are numerous examples of attempts by foreign invaders to destroy the Vargsar dam and so compel Samarkand to surrender. The rulers of ancient Sogdiana therefore did all they could to strengthen its defensive capacity, and always maintained large numbers of troops there. According to Nasafi, in the Early Middle Ages, Vargsar was defended by an army of 4,000 men and by 12,000 *ghazi* or warriors.[19] Samarkand's municipal canal was known as 'Juy-i arziz' (lead canal), since the bottom of the aqueduct was lined with lead. Judging from the size of the bricks[20] discovered south

[16] Mukhamedjanov, 1972.
[17] Bartol'd, 1965, Vol. 3.
[18] Nasafi, n.d.
[19] Ibid.
[20] The wedge-shaped bricks measured 48.5 × 59 – 26 × 8.5 cm; the rectangular bricks 53 × 40 × 9 cm; and the square bricks 42 × 42 × 9 cm.

of Afrasiab near the Khasret-Khîzr mosque, the aqueduct was an arched structure about 3.8–4 m wide. The site where it was located in the Middle Ages was known as 'Rasat-tok' or 'Sari-tok' (i.e. head of the arch). In ancient times, the Samarkand authorities attached particular importance to this structure. Revenue from land along the banks of the Juy-i arziz, in the locality of Sari-tok, was earmarked for the maintenance of the aqueduct and its bridge; and the Samarkand *magi* (fire-worshippers) were required, as a labour duty, to keep the structure in good repair and to guard it the whole year round.[21]

The development of various types of water engineering works was undoubtedlyattributable to the very wide practical experience of irrigation accumulated over many centuries, to the enormous expenditure of labour and to the application of special water engineering techniques by ancient irrigation engineers. Tolstov, in his study of the remains of the ancient irrigation works in Chorasmia, noted that it was precisely during the period of antiquity that a school of irrigation engineers and high priests of science emerged at Chorasmia; it remained in existence until the time of Qutayba's campaign against Khwārizm (ancient Chorasmia). The school included experts in mathematics, water engineering, cartography, astronomy and calendrical observations, which were of great importance for an extensive irrigation economy. [22] The brunt of the task of building irrigation works was, however, borne by the peasants, and many irrigation systems were dug by labourers from the rural communities, without any particular expenditure of effort or contribution by the authorities.

Thus, during the Kushan period, as farming developed and large areas of land were brought under cultivation, an extensive irrigation economy was created in the river valleys and agricultural oases of Central Asia, and this played a major role in the socio-economic and cultural life of the ancient population of the country.

Crop-raising and livestock-breeding

Agriculture attained a high level of development during the Kushan period. Its growth was primarily due to the rapid expansion of irrigation and to the fact that more land was supplied with water and brought under cultivation than at any other time in the ancient history of Central Asia. In the oases crops were grown on irrigated land, while in the foothills and mountain regions dry-land farming was widespread. Also, in the natural wetlands along the river banks, particularly on the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, certain crops were grown on semi-irrigated land.[23] The expansion of farming was, in turn, accompanied by

[21] *Istoriya Samarkanda*, 1969.
[22] Tolstov, 1957.
[23] The main crops grown on semi-irrigated land were melons, pumpkins and other gourds.

the development of agricultural equipment and improvements in methods of cultivation. During the period, iron implements were widely used for the first time and new types of implements introduced, the hoe being replaced to an increasing extent by the plough. The most important step forward in the development of farm equipment was the introduction of the wooden plough with an iron ploughshare, an extremely useful implement that is still used today in Central Asia.[24] The magnitude of the total area of farmland, including arable land, orchards, vineyards, etc., suggests the extensive use of the plough. Such vast stretches of irrigated land could not have been developed and cultivated with the hoe alone.

Written sources and archaeological finds indicate that the crops produced during the period under consideration were highly diversified. Different varieties of grain, fruit stones and other vegetable remains discovered in archaeological excavations show that the crops produced during the period included practically all the crops known in the Middle Ages: cereals (millet, barley and wheat), fruit crops (apricots, peaches, plums, grapes, melons), industrial crops (poppy seeds), [25] fodder crops (lucerne), sesame seeds and pieces of cotton fabric have been found.[26]

written sources dating from the end of the second century B.C. to the beginning of the first century A.D. provide extremely valuable information about the ancient farming system of the Ferghana valley. They describe Ta-yüan (Ferghana) as a province with a developed agriculture and specialized horse-breeding farms. A Chinese ambassador who visited Ferghana in 128 B.C. wrote that Ta-yüan comprised some seventy large and small settlements with a population of 100,000 who tilled the land, sowed barley, rice and lucerne and grew grapes.

As the result of a process of selection, transmitted from generation to generation,various high-yield crops adapted to local conditions were developed. It should be noted that the Chinese copied the practice of growing lucerne, grapes and walnuts from thefarmers of Central Asia. Evidence of the increased diversity of agricultural crops and of the great size of certain stretches of arable land is provided both by archaeological finds and by the variety of the cultivation/irrigation systems and the melon fields identified in the ancient irrigation zone of Chorasmia. Of particular interest in this regard are the systems used for the irrigation of vineyards and melon fields in farmsteads west of Dzhanbas-kala. Here, the alternation of narrow (1.2–1.8 m) and wide (3.3–4.4 m) strips is clearly visible from the colour of the soil and, in places, from the microrelief. At the edges of the vineyard there are traces of a narrow rectangular building, with a row of nine large Kushan clay vessels

[24] An iron plough-head was found during the excavation of the Tal-i Barzu site in Samarkand.
[25] Poppy seeds were found during excavations of the Late Kushan settlement of Kzîlkîr (Bukhara oasis).
[26] Tolstov, 1962.

dug into the ground (Figs. 2 and 3). In one of the buildings a ceramic figurine of a man with a bunch of grapes has been found, and this, together with other evidence, proves that grapes were once grown on these fields with alternating wide and narrow strips. A number of cultivation/irrigation layouts of this kind were brought to light and investigated in the neighbourhood of Koy-Krîlgan-kala, and many grape-pips and graphic representations of grape-pickers were found there.[27] N. M. Negrul, a palaeobotanist, has ascertained that the pips came from a variety of grapes used for wine-making and from large-size table grapes.[28] According to archaeological data, wine-growing was also extensively developed during this period in other provinces of Central Asia, in the Bukhara oasis, in the Ferghana and Merv valleys and in Parthia. One document from Nisa even records the receipt of wine from vineyards in eastern Parthia, [29] and it is no wonder that the Chinese were struck by the development of wine-making in the Ferghana valley. Chinese chroniclers noted the presence of flourishing vineyards and a wine industry in the Ferghana valley, and recounted that rich Ferghanians stored large quantities of wine and that old wine preserved its qualities over several decades.

It should be noted that the agricultural oases in the provinces of Central Asia did not all reach the same level of development during the period under consideration. The ancient agricultural oases, and especially their central areas where there were irrigation systems with abundant water supplies, were the most advanced from the agricultural standpoint. In these areas several types of crops were grown. In areas where regular irrigation was not possible, on the periphery of the ancient Chorasmian oases and along the lower reaches of the Syr Darya and the Zerafshan, especially in the north-eastern section of the ancient Bukhara oasis, in the Karshi and Tashkent oases and in the Ferghana valley, where there are vast foothills and forest-steppe pasture lands, the population engaged in mixed farming. Crop-raising was combined with livestock- breeding, and only one type of crop was grown, usually barley, millet or the fodder known in Bukhara as *alapi-gau*.

Both before and during the Kushan period, livestock-breeding played a prominent role in the economic life of the ancient people of Central Asia. It provided draught animals for agriculture and transport, meat, milk and dairy products for nutrition, and wool and hides for handicrafts. In this period, according to the written sources and archaeological evidence, cattle, sheep, goats, horses and camels were bred in Central Asia. In the oases, people kept livestock in sheds and stables near their homes; in the steppes and foothills, animals were put out to graze on pasturelands; and in the mountainous regions

27 *Koy-krîlgan-kala*, 1967.
28 Andrianov, 1969.
29 D'yakonov and Livshits, 1966.

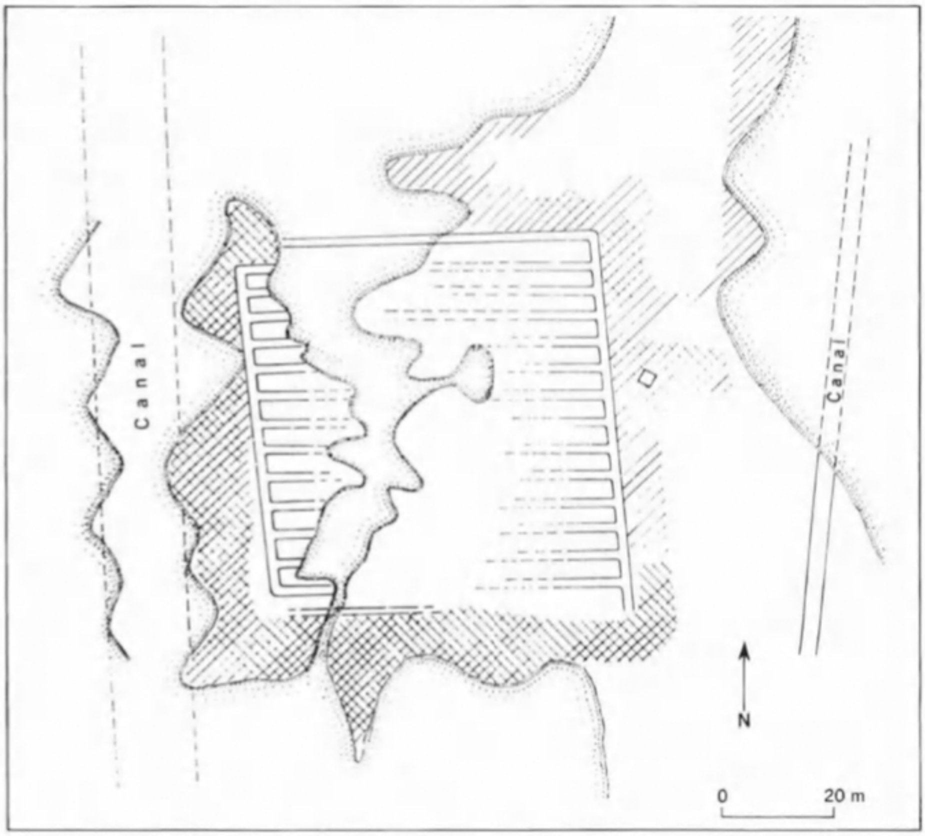


FIG. 2. Plan of an ancient vineyard in Chorasmia.

they grazed on mountain grass, a practice related to the semi-nomadic way of life of some of the population. Horse-breeding played an important role in the life of Ferghana. This is clear from the frequent references made by Chinese authors to large numbers of 'splendid horses' from their reports of the Ferghanians' 'prowess in shooting from horseback'. The Aravan petroglyphs of horses were probably carved during the period under consideration.[30] Judging from the evidence we have of the cultivation of lucerne, it may be assumed that the inhabitants of the Ferghana valley not only drove their herds of horses out to graze on mountain pasturelands but also kept them in stalls.

Cattle and horses accounted for a large proportion of the animals bred in Chorasmia; in the Bukhara oasis, sheep, goats and camels were common; and in the Tashkent oases, both small and large livestock were raised. The K'ang-chü regarded the ram as a noble animal. Farn, one of the Zoroastrian gods, was depicted in the form of a ram, and the handles of vessels were also shaped like rams. Ferghana horses were especially prized and were exported in large numbers beyond the borders of Ferghana. The two-humped Bactrian

[30] Bernshtam, 1952.



FIG. 3. Traces of an ancient vineyard in Chorasmia. (Courtesy of B. V. Andrianov.)

camel was famous in the countries of the East as a strong pack animal, suitable for caravans transporting merchandise over the difficult trade routes that crossed the arid desert. Further evidence of the importance of livestock-breeding in the life of the population of Central Asia in ancient times is provided by the numerous finds of statuettes of camels, horses, rams, etc., during the excavation of archaeological monuments. According to the estimates of the palaeozoologist A. B. Bashyrov, 61.6 per cent of the animal bones found during excavations at the Kushan site of Zar-tepe (Surkhan Darya valley) were remains of sheep and goats, 21 per cent were remains of cattle, 8.6 per cent were from asses, 4 per cent were from pigs, 2.6 per cent from horses and 2 per cent from camels. It must be noted, however, that although the inhabitants of Tashkent and Ferghana at that time followed a settled way of life and were engaged in crop-raising, livestock-breeding and highly artistic handicraft work, careful study and analysis of written and material sources indicate that ancient Ta-yüan (Ferghana) and Chach (Tashkent) were less developed economically than Parthia, Bactria and Sogdiana.

Handicrafts and building

One characteristic feature of the economy of Central Asia in the first to the third century A.D. was the considerable increase in handicraft production, which came to assume

considerable importance in the life of the country. This was to some extent due to the development of irrigated agriculture, which provided the necessary raw materials, and to the expansion of trade, which opened up new markets for the sale of hand-crafted products. Another contributory factor was, of course, the rise of the Kushan Empire.

The rich quality of the material culture remains of that period demonstrates clearly that high levels of development were attained by different branches of handicrafts such as ceramics, metal-working, iron-forging, weaving, jewellery-making, etc. People in large towns and small settlements alike practised a wide variety of handicrafts. pottery was especially well developed at this time. Archaeological excavations have brought to light not only large quantities of ceramic products but also the remains of a whole pottery works containing several kinds of kilns. Both ceremonial and table ware of various kinds and shapes were produced in these kilns. The thin-sided goblets, bowls, cups and other types of ceramic products from the sites of Afrasiab, Er-kurgan, Bukhara and Dalverzin-tepe (Surkhan Darya), from the Tupkhan burial ground (in Hissar) and from other such places are notable for their high quality. Many Central Asian ceramic products of the Kushan period are first-rate examples of the potter's art.

Almost everywhere there were craftsmen producing metalware and adornments for women (bronze vessels, candlesticks, mirrors, bracelets, earrings, rings, etc.) and these were very finely made. Archaeological excavations have brought to light moulds ofvarious shapes for casting metal objects.[31]

Judging from the large collection of objects found in the ancient burial grounds of Bukhara (Lavandak and Kuyumazar, Shuravul) and Hissar (Tupkhan), weapons were produced in large numbers. In Central Asia, during the first few centuries of our era, the commonest type of weapon was the large (up to 1.2 m long) double-edged iron sword, without a tang but with a long, rod-shaped hilt. Other types of weapons produced included daggers, spears, battle-axes, slings and bows-and-arrows. One weapon extensively used at this time was a special type of composite bow, pentagonal in shape, the parts fastened together with strips of bone or horn. In the Middle Ages, this type of bow was known in the East as the '*kamān-i Šāši*' or '*Šāš* bow' (*Šāš* is the Persian form of the name *Čāč*) and was noted for the distance it could propel an arrow and for the accuracy attainable. The arrows were made of wood or reed, the heads being trihedral with a shank.

The ceramic or marble bobbins and pieces of cotton fabric that are frequently found at archaeological sites show that weaving was practised. The written sources tell us that between the *shahristan* and the citadel of Bukhara at the Guriyan gate there were large workshops producing cotton fabrics, shawls and curtains. From the jewellery of every

[31] During the excavations at ancient Merv, traces of large-scale metal production were found.

imaginable kind discovered in many different provinces, it is clear that the jeweller's art was highly developed.

With the growth of handicraft activities and the expansion of trade, the extraction of minerals also increased considerably during the Kushan period. Metal ores, semi-precious and precious stones and other minerals were regularly mined. Mining developed rapidly, especially in the eastern regions of Central Asia. It is known from the written sources that iron, gold, silver and nephrite were mined in the mountains of Ferghana and Sogdiana, silver in Ilak, copper in Karamazar, rubies in Badakhshan and lapis lazuli in Bactria. Some mining products and metal wares were exported.

In the Kushan period, building attained a high technical level. Many towns such as Afrasiab, Kurgan-i Ramitan, Paikend (in the Zerafshan valley), Er-kurgan (in the Kashka Darya valley), Termez, Dalverzin-tepe, Zar-tepe, Khairabad-tepe (in the Surkhan Darya valley), Kanka (in the Tashkent oasis), Toprak-kala, Kunya Uaz, Ayaz-kala (in Chorasmia), Kukhna-kala and Kum-kala (in the Vakhsh valley) were enclosed by thick walls with rectangular towers. The towns and fortified settlements of the Kushan period were built according to a preconceived plan and had a very clear and systematic layout. Many were the administrative and political centres of the various Central Asian regions and provinces, and contained palaces, temples, workshops and dwelling houses. Public buildings were frequently of monumental size. Palaces and castles were built on high platforms and surrounded by strong fortifications. The massive walls of large chambers with high ceilings were decorated with murals and sculptures.

Central Asian fortification engineers were responsible for some major achievements in building techniques. The strong fortification walls reinforced by projecting towers, and the intricate labyrinths with multi-tiered loopholes, were some examples of major developments in the art of fortification at this time. Many different building materials were used. Fortification walls and monumental buildings were built of clay blocks and adobe bricks, which were usually square. Baked bricks were seldom used. In Bactria stone components (for example, base columns and capitals, the frieze from Ayrtam) were widely used for load-bearing structures and decoration. Ceilings were usually supported by pillars and beams. Where the span was relatively small, arched roofs were used. The largest Central Asian cities such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Ershi and many others became centres for both handicraft production and trade, and were frequently visited by merchants coming with their caravans from the countries of Western Asia, India and China.



FIG. 4. Tetradrachm of the Kushan 'Heraus'. (Courtesy of E. A. Davidovich.)

The coinage and monetary system

The political map of Central Asia in the Kushan period was complex. It is clear that northern Bactria and the regions along the Amu Darya as far as the middle reaches of the river formed part of the Kushan Empire. The other provinces of Central Asia constituted separate domains which, in the opinion of some historians, formed part of the Kushan state, while others have regarded them as entirely independent. It is probably nearer the truth to say that they were bound to the Kushan state by some kind of vassal relationship. It should be noted that most of these territories had their own coinage.

In northern Bactria (south Uzbekistan and south Tajikistan), the appearance of the specifically Kushan coinage was preceded by issues of coins (Fig. 4) that were copies of those minted by the Graeco-Bactrian kings Eucratides and Heliocles, the commonest being imitations of those minted by Heliocles; they were issued from about the end of the second century B.C. to the first half of the first century A.D. On the obverse was a bust of the king and on the reverse the figure of a deity with an inscription in Greek. In course of time the image of Heliocles was replaced by that of the local ruler and the Greek legend became increasingly corrupt. Although these coins were issued in silver, the imitations were struck in bronze. In size and weight they fell into four groups ranging from 12–15 to 37 mm in diameter and 2.2–2.3 to 26.5 g in weight.[32]

[32] Masson, 1956; Rtveladze and Pidaev, 1981.

On the earliest specifically Kushan coins struck by the nameless king 'Soter Megas', the deity was replaced by a horseman and a Greek legend reading 'King of Kings, the Great Saviour'.[33]

In the reign of Vima Kadphises, a new type was introduced to the coinage which remained in general use until the Kushan state stopped minting coins. The obverse showed the ruler standing before an altar, while the reverse bore the figure of some deity. The deities, however, were rarely of Greek origin; representations of the Indian god Śiva with the sacred bull Nandi are repeatedly used; and on coins of Kanishka and Huvishka, eastern Iranian gods and goddesses of fire, wind, sun, moon, etc., are common. Although there were many Buddhists in the Kushan Empire, the image of Buddha is very rarely found on coins. In general, the representations of deities on Kushan coins seem to reflect the diversity of religious beliefs throughout the vast territory of the Kushan Empire.[34] Some Early Kushan coins of Kujula and Vima Kadphises had inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, but once the regular series of Kushan coins was established, each coin bore a legend in Bactrian only, using the so-called Kushan script based on the Greek alphabet.

Most Early Kushan coins were of bronze. After the reform introduced by Kadphises II, the monetary system was based on gold staters, or dinars, which usually weighed about 8 g, but there were also double, half and quarter coins weighing 16, 4 and 2 g respectively, though these were more rare. This was practically the only example of a gold-based monetary system in the whole of Central Asia and the neighbouring countries, where in almost every period right up to the Late Middle Ages, monetary systems were based on silver. Gold coins, with their high purchasing power, were used for major transactions and especially for international trade, and it was to meet the requirements of international trade that the gold coins were first produced, copper coins being used for everyday transactions. They were issued in several denominations, but after the reform of Kadphises II the commonest coin in circulation was the large bronze 4 drachm (tetradrachm) that originally weighed about 16 or 17 g but subsequently smaller denominations were also struck (Fig. 5). Large numbers of bronze coins have been found in nearly every province of the Kushan Empire. In northern Bactria, for example, Kushan copper coins have been found at the sites of dozens of monuments, and there have been many finds of these coins even in small rural settlements.[35] It is clear that large sections of the rural population as well as towns people were involved in day-to-day commodity exchanges involving money.

[33] Masson, 1950.
[34] Zeimal, 1965, 1967.
[35] Rtveladze and Pidaev, 1981.



FIG. 5. Coins of Kanishka. (Courtesy of E. V. Zeimal.)

Unlike silver and gold coins, Kushan copper money did not generally circulate outside the territory of the Kushan state, and the area in which copper-coin finds have been recorded provides a clear indication of the line followed by the northern frontiers of the Kushan Empire. Copper coins have been found not only in south Tajikistan and south Uzbekistan, but also along the Amu Darya as far as Chorasmia. However, almost all the coins found in Chorasmia itself had been countermarked, and in the opinion of modern historians, this indicates that Chorasmia was not part of the Kushan state.[36]

Chorasmia began minting its own coinage about the end of the second century B.C., and for a long time it minted only silver. The first issues were imitations of the Graeco-Bactrian tetradrachm coins of King Eucratides, but gradually Chorasmia developed its own types. The obverse bore a portrait of the king, and the reverse the image of a horseman, the Chorasmian tamgha and a Chorasmian legend (Fig. 6). The first copper coins were issued in Chorasmia at about the end of the first century A.D., but it was not until the end of the third century that they were minted in considerable numbers. The obverse portrayed a horseman or the bust of a horseman, and the reverse normally a monogram. Not all coins bore legends. While silver coins had been minted primarily for political purposes (proclamation pieces), the extensive issues of copper coins were a sign that major advances were being made in the economic sphere. The large number of finds in many rural settlements shows that ordinary day-to-day trading activity was already widespread. This last remark applies mainly to right-bank Chorasmia and not Chorasmia as a whole.[37]

Of all the provinces of south Turkmenistan, the most highly developed from the economic standpoint was the province of Margiana. Parthian bronze and silver coins circulated there before the third century A.D. On both, the obverse showed a bust of the king, and the

[36] Masson, 1975; Vaynberg, 1977; Zeimal, 1978.
[37] Vaynberg, 1977.



FIG. 6. Chorasmian coins. (Courtesy of V. M. Masson.)

reverse a royal archer seated (Fig. 7). Early Parthian coins bore inscriptions in Greek which in time became more and more corrupt, and from the first century A.D. local inscriptions in Pahlavi began to appear. Although Margiana may have had its own silver coinage, the fact that it issued its own bronze coins, which have been found in large numbers not only in the ruins of cities but in many rural settlements, is of much greater importance. In the development of day-to-day small-scale trading and commodity-money relationships, Margiana closely resembled Bactria.[38]

In Parthia, another province of south Turkmenistan, the situation regarding the circulation of money was quite different. Although excavations at Nisa have brought to light not only Arsacid silver, but also Graeco-Bactrian, Seleucid Pontic and other silver coins, Parthia had no copper coinage of its own. This would seem to indicate that Parthia was less advanced than Margiana in the matter of trading and economic development in general.[39]

In the Zerafshan valley, several domains issued their own coins. In the first or second century A.D., Samarkand in Sogdiana began producing silver coins with the bust of the king on the obverse and the image of an archer on the reverse. Originally these coins bore legends in both Sogdian and Greek, but those in Greek gradually became corrupt and were eventually replaced entirely by legends in local Sogdian. At the same time the weight of the denomination was progressively reduced from 4 to 1 g.

[38] Masson, 1957*b*
[39] Masson, 1955.



FIG. 7. Coins of Sanabares. (Courtesy of V. M. Masson.)

In the Bukhara oasis, silver coins were issued from the second century A.D. They were modelled on the tetradrachm piece of the Graeco-Bactrian king Euthydemus and bore his profile on the obverse and a seated Zeus on the reverse. As was the case elsewhere, the Greek legends became increasingly corrupt and were finally replaced by legends in Sogdian. They did not suffer any significant reduction in weight but the purity of their silver was considerably debased.

The so-called coins of Hyrcodes were probably minted in the north-western parts of the Bukhara oasis. The obverse bore a bust of the ruler and on the reverse was the figure of a horse or a standing deity. On these coins, too, the legends were changed, the weight reduced and the purity of the metal debased.[40]

There is no evidence of the minting of coins in the Kashka Darya valley during the Kushan period. The earliest issues of so-called 'Nakhshab' copper coins were minted in the Karshi oasis, probably in the fourth century A.D.[41]

According to all the available evidence, Chach was the only province in the Syr Darya region that minted its own coins, the so-called ancient Chach copper coins with the head of the ruler on the obverse and a seal with a Sogdian legend on the reverse. This group of coins, which dates from somewhere between the second and fourth centuries A.D.,[42] has not yet been adequately studied. However, ancient Chach coins – and even hoards of them

[40] Zeimal, 1978.
[41] Kabanov, 1973.
[42] Masson, 1953; Masson, 1966.

– have been found at many early sites, showing a well-developed relationship between commodities and money.[43]

In Central Asia, in the Kushan period generally, the minting and circulation of money increased greatly, and in a number of provinces, local coins – local with respect to their iconography and legends – came to replace the imitations of Hellenistic coins. At the same time, the economic development of the different provinces of Central Asia was very uneven. An analysis of the numismatic material indicates that northern Bactria and Margiana were the most advanced provinces, while Chorasmia, the Zerafshan valley and Chach were somewhat less advanced. Finally, there were some provinces, such as Ferghana, that did not have their own coinage and where commodity-money relations were still in their infancy. In general, however, it may be said that during the Kushan period there was a developed monetary system with coins of various denominations minted in large numbers. Copper coins accounted for the greater part of the Kushan issues, as these were evidently necessary for everyday buying-and-selling transactions.

Trade and commerce

Both internal and external trade and commerce flourished in the Kushan period. The development of trade and the strengthening of economic ties resulted, above all, from the consolidation of the supremacy of the Kushan Empire, the expansion of agriculture and the growth of handicraft production. As is clear from the mass of archaeological material from various ancient sites of the period, trade between the Central Asian provinces increased greatly. Items of trade included products of handicrafts and agriculture, and both consumer goods and luxury articles. Consumer goods such as cereals, fruit, textiles, pottery, timber, etc. probably formed items of regular and extensive trade within the country, which demanded the minting of local coinages in different regions – Chorasmia, Margiana, Samarkand, Bukhara and Chach – serving as a medium of exchange in retail transactions.

The agricultural regions of Central Asia were at this time conducting a particularly vigorous trade with livestock-breeders of the nomadic steppe zone. They were linked by a trade route that ran along the Syr Darya. This caravan route, which linked the northern regions of Ferghana and ancient Chach with the regions of the lower and middle Syr Darya and the Aral Sea area, served as a kind of two-way transmission line for the agricultural areas.[44] Cereals, fruit, handicraft products and weapons were transported along this route to the nomads of the north; in exchange, furs and skins, meat and milk products, livestock

[43] As a result of extensive archaeological research in recent years, 1,000 coins minted in Chach in various denominations have now been found. Previously only a few specimens were available.

[44] Litvinsky, 1972.

and raw materials for weaving were accepted in the south by the sedentary peoples. It is not surprising, therefore, that this period witnessed the growth of major cities in the Syr Darya basin, ruins of which have been found at Akhsikent, [45] Kanka and Shahrukhiya, [46] Otrar[47] and Dzhetî-Asar.[48] Foreign trade also expanded considerably in this period. The main trans-Asian trade routes passing through Central Asia linked the Mediterranean countries with India and the Far East. Substantial overland trade was conducted with India. The most convenient route from India passed through the cities of Taxila and Peshawar, and along the Kabul river valley into Bactria. From there merchants travelled by boat down the Amu Darya, over the Caspian Sea and across Transcaucasia to the Black Sea. They also made their way to southern Siberia. The Silk Route from China to the Mediterranean countries had a branch linking Bactria to Barygaza (Broach), which had established regular maritime links with the countries of Western Asia. This branch acquired greater importance when contact between Bactria and the West was suspended because of international politics. In about 127 B.C. Chang Ch'ien discovered in Bactria some bamboo articles and textile goods which had come from Szŭ-chuan via India.

The main exports from India were spices (pepper, ginger, saffron, betel), perfumes and medicines (sandalwood oil, spikenard, musk, cinnamon, aloe, bdellium), lacquers and dyes (indigo, cinnabar), silk, rice, sugar, vegetable oils (sesame, coconut oils), cotton, precious woods (teak, sandalwood, ebony), pearls, precious and semi-precious stones (diamonds, sapphires, rubies, jasper, etc.), ivory, exotic animals and slaves.[49]

At the same time, India imported precious metals (gold, silver) and non-ferrous metals (copper, tin, lead, antimony), horses, purple dye, coral, wine, slaves and artistic pottery and glassware. According to a report by Pliny the Elder (XII, 8) dating from the second half of the first century A.D., the value of imports into India, East Turkestan and Arabia totalled 100 million sesterces. Some of these imports undoubtedly came from the Central Asian provinces of the Kushan Empire. Moreover, there is evidence of Bactrian merchants travelling to the confines of the Roman Empire, particularly to Alexandria in Egypt, one of the leading commercial centres, and of Roman merchants visiting Central Asia, where a fairly large number of Roman objects and swords have been found,[50] testifying to the existence of trade links between the Roman Empire and Central Asia.

[45] Bernshtam, 1952.
[46] Buryakov, 1975.
[47] Akishev et al., 1972.
[48] Levina, 1971.
[49] Pigulevskaya, 1951.
[50] Staviskiy, 1964; Masson, 1966.

Intensive trade was also conducted during this period with Han China, which exported silk, nephrite, lacquerware, hides, iron and nickel. Central Asian merchants exported glass, precious stones and ornaments to China. Luxury goods were the main articles of trade, as was usually the case in ancient times. The Sogdians played an important role in the development of trade links with China. In Tun-huang (East Turkestan), letters in the Sogdian language have been found, dating back to the early fourth century A.D. (or to the end of the second century A.D.). One of them notes that 100 freemen from Samarkand were living in Tun-huang. W. B. Henning estimates that the number of Sogdians (including slaves and their families) in Tun-huang must have totalled 1,000. Several letters contain information on merchandise, trade, prices, etc. The Sogdians living in East Turkestan maintained close contact with their home town in Samarkand.[51]

During the period under consideration, the rulers of different countries and provinces played an active role in international trade and enjoyed a monopoly of trade in certain goods. They used to dispatch their ambassadors with large quantities of merchandise and valuable gifts, and formed their own trading guilds. For example, in Book 2 of the *Mahābhārata* (second to fourth century A.D.), there is a reference to gifts brought to Yudhiṣṭhira, the King of the Kurus, at Indraprastha (the site of modern Delhi) by emissaries of various peoples, among them Central Asians. From Vahlika (Bactria) came 'woollen blankets, of good proportions, beautifully dyed, pleasant to the touch', various fabrics, sheepskins, weapons and precious stones, and the Sakas and Tocharians used to bring horses 'capable of covering long distances' (*Mahābhārata* II.47).

The Silk Route

A major role in the development of international trade during the Kushan period was played by the Silk Route, the main trans-Asian caravan route, which, from the second century B.C. onwards, linked China, India and Central Asia with the countries of the Mediterranean. It owed its name to the fact that the principal commodity carried was Chinese silk. The Silk Route began at Ch'ang-an, the capital of China at that time, and ran westward along the edge of the Gobi Desert, passing through Lan-chou to Tun-huang. At Tun-huang, it divided into two, one branch going south and the other north. The northern route followed a straight line from Tun-huang to Turfan, crossing the sand-dunes of the White Dragon salt desert, which at one time had been part of the Lop Nor lake bed. That was the most difficult stretch of the Silk Route, and the trade caravan guides – usually Sogdians or Bactrians – preferred to bypass the sand-dunes of the White Dragon and make a large detour to the north on

[51] Henning, 1948.

the way to Turfan. From Turfan the Silk Route went through Ch'iu-tzŭ into Aksu, then from Kashgar to Ferghana via Samarkand, and on to Antioch in Margiana. The southern route from Tun-huang went via Khotan and Yarkand to the capital of Bactria, and then to Zariaspa and Antioch in Margiana, where the two roads joined. From Margiana the Silk Route ran west to Hecatompylos, the ancient capital of Parthia, and thence to Media, Ecbatana and Mesopotamia, and across the Euphrates to the ancient ports on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean (see also Chapters 16 and 19).

There was a constant struggle between the Chinese and the Central Asians, and between the Parthians and the Romans, to establish control over the Silk Route and so dominate international trade. As early as the first century B.C., Han China took control of the eastern section and launched a military campaign against Ferghana. From that time onwards, China had direct trade relations with Bactria. According to Szŭ-ma Ch'ien, from the years 115–114 B.C. onwards, more than ten missions a year were sent from Ferghana to the West. Caravans made their way unimpeded to Bactria, India and Sogdiana, reached Parthia and penetrated even further west. The seizure of the Silk Route, which made it possible to maintain regular and direct contacts between Han China and the states of Central Asia and the West, laid the foundations for cultural and trade exchanges. From Central Asia, China received grapes, lucerne, beans, pomegranates, saffron and nut trees; the acquisition from Ferghana of the war-horses needed for the new Chinese cavalry was of particular importance.

Parthian merchants tried to prevent the establishment of direct trade links between the Roman Empire and China. Merchants from the Kushan Empire also competed with the Parthians and tried to become major intermediaries. The basic means of transport in this international caravan trade was the camel. The accounts of travellers suggest that some of the most difficult stretches of the Silk Route were passable only because of the superior qualities of the Bactrian two-humped camel.

Social structure

Very little is known of the social structure and types of land-ownership in Central Asia under the Kushans. The Kushan Empire was one of the great powers of the period. It comprised a large number of countries with different social structures. It included fertile agricultural oases with many commercial and handicrafts centres and rural settlements as well as vast steppelands and mountain regions. In the towns, slave-owning systems existed, while in agricultural regions freemen in communes preserved in their way of life many aspects of tribal–clan relations. Such relations were particularly common among the

livestock-breeders who lived in the steppe and foothill regions of Central Asia. Before the establishment of their empire, the Kushans had been a relatively small nomadic tribe and long preserved many of their own traditions even after they had settled in Bactria, but once they had become rulers of a huge empire, their patterns of social organization changed considerably. Detailed analysis of archaeological material (especially the types of settlements and material remains) shows that in the Kushan period there was considerable variety in social status and property ownership, patterns which subsequently spread to virtually the whole of the territory of Central Asia. On the local coins minted in Central Asia and in the 'Ancient Letters' and other Sogdian written documents, a wide range of terms is used to denote different social groups in the Kushan period and the era immediately preceding it.

There is some direct, and a great deal of indirect, evidence to show that the commune occupied an important place in the socio-economic life of Central Asia and in the ancient East as a whole.[52] This seems to have continued until the Early Middle Ages, for which evidence is available. Thus, the commune in Sogdiana was known as *nāf*; it consisted of the aristocracy (*āzāt*, *āzātkār*), merchants (*xvākar*), and free peasants (who were members of the commune) and craftsmen (*kārikār*).[53] Of these three categories in the *nāf* the highest status was enjoyed by the *āzāt* that is, persons of 'high and noble birth', the *āzātkār* or free persons associated with the *āzāt* and the 'children of the *āzāt* of aristocratic, noble origin'.[54] According to the written sources, the *āzāt* owned the land and the villages and were the chief retainers of the local and provincial rulers.

Next came the *xvākar* or merchants, who constituted one of the propertied classes. The third category consisted of the *kārikār* who paid a poll-tax and were not regarded as noblemen. At that time there were certainly slaves and a dependent, subject population. The Sogdian 'Ancient Letters' contain terms such as '*bandak*' (slave) and '*daya*' (bondwoman). A fairly complete picture of the composition of ancient Chorasmian classes and their use of slave labour in the economy is provided by documents from the Toprak-kala palace archives. These give the names of the heads of 'family households' and of 'house-owners', their sons, sons-in-law and slaves. The roll of the 'House of Gavšimava' (Document No. 8) listed a total of twenty-one males: the house-owner, his two sons, his son-in-law and seventeen slaves – including twelve slaves serving the house-owner, his sons and son-in-law, two in the service of their wives, two to look after the young grandchildren and one to look after the concubine of the master of the house. The 'House of Vavanšira' (Document No. 7) had seventeen males: the master of the house, his son-in-law and fifteen slaves, including

[52] D'yakonov, 1967.
[53] Smirnova, 1970.
[54] Henning, 1948.

twelve attached to the master of the house himself. The families described in these documents were very prosperous, as is clear from the large number of slaves in proportion to the number of free adult males.[55]

In spite of the very considerable number of slaves, slavery was not the only, andprobably not the predominant, form of labour. Little use was made of slaves either in agriculture or in handicraft work, as their labour was not profitable.[56]

Land-ownership

Unfortunately, historians do not yet have at their disposal concrete material on many of the most important aspects of the social and economic history of Central Asia during the Kushan period. There is virtually no information from Central Asia proper on the different categories of land-ownership.

There is, however, some direct, and a great deal of indirect, evidence that suggests that there were several different categories. The documents from the archives of Old Nisa, which provide some insight into the economy of southern Turkmenistan during the first century B.C., are particularly valuable. There was one category known as *uzbar* land. The *uzbar* or levy, was already known in the Achaemenid period as revenue directly received from royal land. A number of estates consisting partly of vineyards belonged to this category. These estates – about a score of them are known – were largely *dastkirt* or royal estates. The same estate might also contain *patbāzik* land. In Achaemenid times the term '*patbāzik*' meant the delivery to the king of a contribution in kind, consisting of fruit and types of produce.[57] It is highly probable that a certain proportion of irrigated lands in the Central Asian oases belonged to temples. A special priestly class, who is attested in the area long before the Kushans, also probably possessed land during this period. The medieval name '*vagnze*' was quite common in Central Asia; it was linked with the Sogdian term '*βayan*' (temple) and probably meant land belonging to temples or shrines. Besides the royal and temple lands, there were private and communal lands. In all probability, there was more land under communal ownership than any other type. There is some evidence to show that communes owned whole irrigation systems and the regions irrigated by them, as well as settlements and grazing lands. Localities settled by rural communes were called *varzana*, *vardana* or *gava*, meaning village or rural district, and it was precisely at this time that the fortified settlement of Vardanze, in the northern part of the Bukhara oasis, was established. Unfortunately, there is almost no specific material on communal

55 Gudkova and Livshits, 1967.
56 Gafurov, 1972.
57 D'yakonov and Livshits, 1960*a*.

land-ownership; but it seems probable that the commune during this period was intensively exploited by the state and large land-holders, who tried to attach members of the commune to the land – a process that ultimately led to the emergence of feudalism in Central Asia.

13

Cities and Urban Life in the Kushan Kingdom*

B. A. Litvinsky

Contents

The development of urban patterns

The evolution of urban life in the territories that formed part of the Kushan state, or were subject to its political or cultural influence, can be traced back to the Bronze Age. During the time of the Achaemenids, urban planning and architecture were strongly influenced by West Asian styles. Hellenism had an even greater impact on town planning in Central Asia after the establishment of Greek cities in the area. This was the time when cities began to amass so much economic power that they became an important element in the power of the state. In the Kushan period that followed (between the first century B.C. and the fourth century A.D.), Central Asian, Hellenistic and Indian town planning blended into a

* See Map 6.

single form. During this period, the ancient cities grew faster than ever before and urban life flourished.[1] Archaeological excavations provide important evidence about the cities of the Kushan period – their layout, architecture and material culture. One of the most thoroughly studied sites is Taxila in north Pakistan, where John Marshall carried out extensive excavations between 1913 and 1934.

The Mauryan city of Taxila on the Bhir Mound was replaced under the Graeco-Bactrians in the second century B.C. by a new city at Sirkap, which remained in use up to the Early Kushan period. The city at Sirkap has the shape of an irregular trapezium, stretching 1,300 m from north to south and 900 m (at its widest) from east to west. Topographically, it is divided into two unequal parts – a lower northern and an upper southern city. Remains of walls along the dividing line between them still survive. The city was intersected from north to south by the main street with side-streets running off at right angles. Each of it is divided into two unequal parts – a lower northern and an upper southern city. Remains of walls along the dividing line between them still survive. The city was intersected from north to south by the main street with side-streets running off at right angles. Each of the spaces between the side-streets (which were 36.5 m or slightly more apart) contained blocks of buildings, occasionally divided by small alleyways. Both sides of the main street were lined with shops (Fig. 1), as well as some shrines, especially stupas. Behind the shops and the shrines were the dwelling houses. East of the main street was the royal palace and, near by, some more opulent-looking two-storey dwellings. In the city and the surrounding areas, there were Buddhist stupas (Figs. 2 and 3), monasteries and shrines. Some 650 m outside the north gate was the non-Buddhist Jandial temple.[2] Early under the Kushans, the city was again transferred to a new site at Sirsukh (Fig. 4). This new Kushan city, founded under the nameless king Soter Megas, covered an area of 1,370 × 1,000 m, but has not yet been excavated.

Shaikhan Dheri, the second city of Charsadda, was laid out in a similar manner. The city was divided by a network of parallel streets some 36.5 m apart. Between the two central thoroughfares in the city centre was a sanctuary, probably a Buddhist stupa, and in between the streets were blocks of buildings.[3] Subsequent excavations have established that this city was occupied from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D.[4]

Bhita is the modern name for the ruins located 16 km south-east of Allahabad. From seal inscriptions the settlement seems to have been known in antiquity as Vichi. Excavations by Marshall in 1909–12 showed that the city covered an area of about 26 ha, and was

[1] Litvinsky, 1973.
[2] Marshall, 1951, pp. 112 et seq., 139 et seq., 1960, pp. 60 et seq.; A. Ghosh, 1948, pp. 41 et seq.
[3] Wheeler, 1962, pp. 16–17, Plates XV –XVI.
[4] Dani, 1955/56, pp. 17 et seq.



FIG. 1. Sirkap. Location of shops (?). (Photo: Musée Guimet/Tissot.)



FIG. 2. Sirkap. Stupa 1A between the second and third street east. (Photo: Musée Guimet/Tissot.)

surrounded by a fortification wall 3.4 m thick by 12 m high. The city area was traversed by straight parallel streets, one of which, 9 m wide, the ‘Main Street’, began at the city gates and led to a sanctuary in the centre of the town. Another, half its width, which Marshall



FIG. 3. Sirkap. Stupa G east. (Photo: Musée Guimet/Tissot.)



FIG. 4. Sirsukh. Wall running east to south. (Photo: Musée Guimet/Tissot.)

called 'Bastion Street', ran directly parallel to the Main Street at a distance of 45 m.[5] Although the houses on both streets had identical floor plans, those on the Main Street were noticeably larger. In the spaces between the parallel streets, there must have been

[5] The foundations of the buildings in the city date from the Mauryan period, but many of the surviving structures on the Main Street and Bastion Street were built and existed during the period from the first century B.C. to the third century A.D. This was the time when the city had a network of parallel streets. The buildings constructed in the post-Kushan period were not lined up on the same axis. Thus, Item 50, a Gupta temple in the centre of the city, and items 43 and 45, fourth-century-A.D. housing in the north-west part of the city, are all oriented at an angle in the axis of the above-mentioned streets (see Dani, 1955/56, pp. 40, 43).

two rows of two- or three-storey houses each accommodating between ten and twenty occupants, family members and servants included. It has also been estimated that the city had about 940 such houses and a population of between 10,000 and 20,000 persons.[6] In the block of buildings on the south-west side of the High Street was a house (14 × 13.4 m), consisting of a rectangular courtyard flanked by twelve rectangular square rooms. The house had two entrances on opposite sides (north-east and south-west) each set near the longitudinal axis. In one corner room, there are the foundations for four columns, and judging by the thickness of the walls, part of the building may have had a second floor. Marshall was of the opinion that this house could have been built in the Mauryan period. A seal found under the wall foundations and, therefore, belonging to an earlier period bears an inscription that Marshall read as '*Sahijitiye nigamaśa*', prompting the suggestion that the earlier house could have served as the office (*nigama*) of a guild, though the reading has subsequently been disputed.

From the seals found, it has been possible to identify the names of the owners ofdifferent houses. One belonging to Nāgadeva and built in the first century B.C., mostly of burnt bricks, had a section facing the Main Street which Marshall thought was a shop. Flights of steps, flanked by platforms on both sides, led from the street side to the central rectangular room of the shop. On either side was a much smaller room forming a lateral wing, and all three were built in a row along the street. Behind were the courtyards, on the farther side of which were the living quarters (11.3 × 10.4 m), an inner courtyard surrounded by structures mainly rectangular in design. The house was a self-contained unit, separated from the surrounding buildings. It had its façade on the High Street, with lanes on the other three sides and an additional doorway opening on to one of them.

Built in the first century B.C., this house remained in use throughout the Kushan period (seventeen coins from the reigns of Kanishka and Huvishka were found there). In a neighbouring house with a similar layout, an ivory seal was discovered in the fourth-fifth-century stratum bearing the inscription '*Śreṣṭhi Jayavasuda*', which Marshall interprets as 'the banker Jayavasuda',[7] but the person concerned, presumably the owner of the house, could very well have been the elder of a guild. Like others in Bhita, this house was surrounded by lanes. The same was true of houses in Vaiśāli, Rājagṛha, Kolhapur, Sambhar and other cities: each house was surrounded by narrow alleyways separating it from neighbouring buildings. According to the written sources, these alleys were three paces wide.[8]

[6] Marshall, 1911, pp. 127–41; Schlingloff, 1970, pp. 24–7.
[7] Marshall, 1915, pp. 36–48.
[8] Schlingloff, 1970, pp. 27–8.

In Sisupalgarh (ancient Kalingaṅagara), where the ruins of the ancient city cover an area of about 1.36 km^2, the ramparts (10 m thick) enclose an area almost perfectly rectangular, with a bastion at each corner. As Lal has noted, this layout calls for a regular network of streets running from east to west and north to south, intersecting each other inside the city.[9] The same system was adopted in other cities in India, for example, Udegram.[10]

One of the most famous cities in the Kushan Empire was Begram, north of Kabul, at the confluence of the Panjshir and Ghorband rivers. The city was rectangular in shape, extending 800 m from north to south and 450 m from east to west with a citadel in the north-east. The stone foundations (0.5–0.7 m high) of the city walls were set into the subsoil, supporting the main section of the wall constructed of square sun-dried clay bricks. Square towers were built along the wall, at intervals of 17 m, and in front were two parallel ditches. A central thoroughfare divided the city into two parts, and it is assumed that there was another thoroughfare at right angles dividing the city into quarters. In the palace in the southern part of the city a number of storerooms were discovered containing hundreds of articles of carved ivory (Fig. 5) brought from India, and Western objects of Roman date imported from the Mediterranean. The excavations yielded a large collection of articles of material culture.[11]

In south Uzbekistan, in Bactrian territory, a large city has been excavated atDalverzin-tepc. The main portion, tentatively called the 'lower city', formed a rectangle 650 × 500 m. In the south corner, partly extending beyond the city boundaries, is a citadel shaped like a rounded trapezium (maximum measurement – 170 × 200 m). Outside the city walls were a Buddhist shrine and necropolis, and a Zoroastrian chapel (*naus*). The 'lower city' was surrounded by thick ramparts with towers at 30–40 m intervals. Outside the fortifications, as a further precaution, were canals, a river-bed and a ditch. The only gate was in the southern section near the citadel. In the Kushan period the city was densely built with large blocks of buildings, urban thoroughfares and water reservoirs. Houses belonging to the aristocratic section of the population were situated in the heart of the city, while those belonging to the poor were built on the outskirts. The southern quarters were inhabited by craftsmen near kilns and pottery workshops. It was there, too, on high ground that the temple of the Bactrian goddess was found. Two palatial dwellings (DT-5 and DT-6) had an impressive structure decorated with columns with Attic-style bases. Constructed with vaults and arches of sun-dried clay-brick, their principal façades were embellished with a deep portico bounded in front by columns. Behind the portico, on the principal axis, was

9 Lal, 1949, pp. 62–105.
10 Gullini, 1962, pp. 173 et seq.; Faccena, 1964, pp. 14–23.
11 Ghirshman, 1946; Hackin, 1954.



FIG. 5. Begram. Decorated ivory plate, first/second centuries B.C. (Photo: UNESCO/L. Hammerschmid.)

a large vestibule with a reception hall beyond. The front part of the building, reserved for receiving guests, was separated from the living quarters by a corridor. All the dwelling-houses in Dalverzin-tepe (ordinary as well as palatial) had one feature in common – a special room set aside for household prayer, with a niche for kindling the holy fire. At Dalverzin-tepe some outstanding works of art were discovered, including many pieces of secular and Buddhist sculpture and paintings (Fig. 6) and a most remarkable treasure of 115 gold objects of jewellery, works of art and gold bars with inscriptions in Kharoṣṭhī, indicating their weight.[12]

At Toprak-kala in Chorasmia (Fig. 7), the rectangular site (2.5 km^2 in area) running from north to south is surrounded by a wall with many square towers. In the north-east corner was a huge castle for the ruler, with a large courtyard and a triple-towered keep, the remains of which rise to a height of 25 m. South-cast of the castle was a building containing a large central area with a corridor running round, probably a fire temple. The residential area was bisected by a main thoroughfare running from north to south (where the city gate had a huge protective structure in front of it). At right angles to this thoroughfare were streets that divided the city into ten symmetrical blocks. Although the top stratum dates from the fourth–fifth centuries A.D. (and in a few sections from the sixth–eighth), the city was originally laid out in the second-third centuries. Each insula measures 40 × 100 m and

[12] Pugachenkova, 1976; Vorob'eva Desyatovskaya, 1976.



FIG. 6. Dalverzin-tepe. Fragment of wall painting showing the head of a goddess. (After Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, p. 48.)



FIG. 7. Toprak-kala (Chorasmia). (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

the street widths are 4.5 m and 10 m (in the case of the main artery). The buildings of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. formed part of a large building complex developed at one time. It is not clear whether its large units formed part of a single architectural ensemble or constituted separate households. Small groups of two or three buildings – some of them craftsmen's dwelling houses – were found in the outer blocks at Toprak–kala.

The palace, situated in the castle inside the square formed by the outer walls, had over 100 rooms on the ground floor, and there are remains of more rooms on a first floor. Three stages in its existence from the second–third to the fourth–fifth centuries A.D. have been identified. The palace contained a large number of works of art (paintings, sculptures, etc.), and the 'Hall of Kings' alone contained 138 statues. This building, which dominated the whole complex, must be regarded as a holy palace because of its sanctuaries associated with various aspects of the royal cult. Adjoining the north-west section of the Toprak-kala site is the 'north complex' (250 × 400 m), which has an amplified layout and contains a number of imposing structures. Remains of bas-reliefs, sculptures and wall-paintings have been found in the halls. The monumental nature of the buildings, and their layout and decorations, suggest that it was an open palace built at the same time as the palace in the citadel. On the north-west side was a rectangular undeveloped plot of land surrounded by an embankment (perhaps a park or a necropolis).[13]

Mention should also be made of city-sites such as Zar-tepe, Kei-Kobad-shah, Er-kurgan, Saksan-Okhur, etc. Of the various sites of the same period which have been thoroughly investigated by archaeologists, the Kara-tepe and Fayaz-tepe Buddhist complexes atTermez deserve special mention. The findings resulting from excavations undertaken at Dilberjin (Fig. 8) by a joint Soviet-Afghan archaeological expedition[14] are also of considerable importance for studying the history of the Kushano-Bactrian cities.

City life in the Kushan period

From available evidence it is clear that life in the cities of Central Asia from the first century B.C. to the third–fourth centuries A.D. was incomparably more intensive than that in the preceding period. This is illustrated by:

The quantitative growth of the network of urban settlements and the emergence of new cities that had never existed before (at no time in the ancient history of Central Asia had there been so many cities).

The enlargement of urban areas in the old cities that had existed earlier and the increased density of urban construction.[15]

Further development of the division of cities into three parts: citadel, city proper and suburbs (which, in addition to houses and workshops, included religious buildings, especially Buddhist shrines, temples and cemeteries). Side by side with the cities which had this tripartite pattern there were also cities of other types, many of them lacking a citadel.

[13] Tolstov, 1948, pp. 119, 123, Fig. 62, 1962, pp. 204–6; Rapoport, 1981*a*.
[14] Kruglikova, 1982.
[15] The reference here is to a general trend; in certain specific cases, this trend was not evident.



FIG. 8. Plan of Dilberjin-tepe. (After Kruglikova, 1979, p. 121.) (Photo: V. N. Yagodin.)

Fundamental internal socio-economic changes in the urban organism and the increase in the importance of the city in the economic life of the country, resulting primarily from the rapid growth of urban handicrafts. The cities became centres for the production of commodities for sale, hence their key importance in the city–village–nomadic-steppe system. With the concentration of religious buildings within cities the latter also played an increasingly important role as centres of ideological life.

These conclusions, based on material relating to Central Asia, can – as is clear from the available evidence – be applied also to other territories of the Kushan state. As Dani and Khan note:

> The urban centres increased to a very large extent during the Kushan period. In the main valley of Peshawar all such cities lie to the north of the Kabul River along the old route that came from Taxila and across the Indus to Hund or Salature (present-day Lahur in Swabi Tehsil) onward to Puṣkalāvatī (present-day Charsadda) at the confluence of the Swat and Kabul Rivers. Here the routes diverged in various directions. If the city mounds that exist today on these routes are counted, it is not surprising to note that urbanization even in modern Pakistan has not reached that stage in the Peshawar region. This urbanization in the Kushan period was based on industrial development and on trade entrepots.[16]

Ghosh, too, has noted that 'the Kushan Empire comprised many cities in the Panjab and the Gangetic Basin'.[17]

The role of the city in military operations can hardly be overestimated. Cities were well fortified and some were virtually impregnable. The fortifications were designed to make the best possible use of the characteristics of the terrain, and were supplemented by deep ditches (one or two rows), forward outposts and thick walls with rectangular (more rarely, round) towers, parapets, etc.[18] Together, the fortified cities formed the defensive backbone of individual provinces and of the entire Kushan state. Thus, cities became vital components of the whole infrastructure. To mention only the case of Bactria, in Surkhan Darya province, some 110 monuments have been recorded, most of them situated in river valleys. Two or three are of Achaemenid date, about twenty belong to the Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian periods and seventy or eighty belong to Kushan times.[19]

City planning

In the Kushan period, both in Central Asia and in India, cities were still predominantly rectangular in shape,[20] though a few had other shapes: trapezoidal, semi-circular, circular or polygonal. Several newly founded cities, and some dating from earlier periods, were extremely large; but there were also small- and medium-sized towns. Some cities (the new ones in particular) had no citadels, while others had large ones. Indian sources contained a highly developed terminology for describing various types of cities.[21] On the basis of

16 Dani and Khan, 1974, p. 102.
17 A. Ghosh, 1975, p. 109.
18 Francfort, 1979.
19 Rtveladze, 1978, p. 114.
20 Filliozat, 1959, pp. 251–2; Schlingloff, 1970, pp. 45–6.
21 A. Ghosh, 1973, pp. 45–6.

archaeological material, cities as organisms can be classified only in external and quantitative terms, that is, in terms of their general layout, component parts, shape and size. On the basis of such material alone, it is extremely difficult to describe the most important features of urban life, ranging from the principles of urban planning to details of municipal administration. When written sources are used, the situation is quite different. Although information about cities in Middle Asia is scanty, for ancient northern India there are many epigraphical and literary sources (the *Arthaśāstra*, the *Milindapañha*, the epics, the Jaina canon, the *Jātakas*, special architectural treatises and others), dating back to the end of the first millennium B.C. and to the first half of the first millennium A.D. and containing various kinds of information on economic and social history and especially on the history of the city.[22] In view of the parallel development of urban societies, analysis of Indian sources is especially interesting.[23]

The *Arthaśāstra* states that, in selecting the place for building a fortress or a settlement, it is important to take into account the features of the terrain, and the final choice must be 'approved by architects'. The city must be strongly fortified: there must be three rows of moats filled with water, a rampart, walls with square towers, etc. The city must be traversed by three roads running from north to south and three running from east to west, and four of the twelve city gates must be main gates. Within the city, the siting of various buildings – from the palace and temples down to the dwellings of craftsmen – is subject to strict rules (*Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra* 2.3.1–32; 2.4.1–32).[24] The layout of streets and residential areas must be carefully planned – *Suvibhāta* (*Rāmayana* 1.5.8; 1.5.10: V, 53, 20 etc.; *Mahābhārata* 1.199.34).

The *Milindapañha*[25] gives a detailed description of the development of an ideal city:

> A city architect, when he wants to build a city, first looks about for a district that is level, not elevated, not low-lying, free from gravel and stone, secure, irreproachable and delightful, and then when he has had made level there what was not level and has had it cleared of stumps of trees and thorns, he might build a city there. Fine and regular [it would be], well-planned, the moats and encircling walls dug deep, the city gates, the watch-towers and the ramparts strong, the cross-roads, squares, junctions and the places where three or four roads meet numerous, the main-roads clean, level and even, and bazaar-shops well laid out, [the city] full of parks, pleasances, lakes, lotus-pools and wells adorned with a wide variety of shrines to devas, the whole free from defects.

22 It was thought that some works from the post-Kushan period might also usefully be included here.
23 Litvinsky, 1979, 1981; Litvinsky and Sedov, 1983.
24 Kangle, 1972, pp. 66–72.
25 Horner, 1964, Vol. II, pp. 170–1, cf. the *Manusmṛti* (Sanskrit code of laws), Vol. VII, pp. 69–74; the *Rāmayana* 1.5.7; also the descriptions in the Jaina canon (Jaina *sutras*), Vol. I, pp. 252–3; and Schlingloff, 1970, p. 7.

The description of the ideal city has much in common and in many ways is identical with the description of Sagala (modern Sialkot). From the *Milindapañha*, we also learn that the city gates had watch-towers. The city was encircled by a deep moat and surrounded by walls. Among the urban roads, special mention is made of the carriage-roads. The city had a large number of shops, thousands of richly decorated buildings and 'hundreds of thousands' of dwelling-houses.

The architect-builder 'plans the distribution of the carriage-roads, the squares and the places where three or four roads meet'. We learn that the city had a special inspector who sat at a cross-roads in the middle of the city, from where he could see anyone approaching from the eastern, southern, western or northern quarter of the city. From other ancient Indian sources (the *Jātakas*), it is known that the city had a special official, the *dovārika*, to shut the city gates at night and also to show the way to strangers.[26] The *Milindapañha* also provides a vivid picture of the city and its streets swarming with 'elephants, horses, chariots and pedestrians, with groups of handsome men and women; it was crowded with ordinary people, warriors, nobles, brahmans, merchants and workers' and a variety of ascetics.[27] Alongside the carriages, riders on horseback moved along the streets.[28] There were many strangers in the cities – people from other provinces of India and from Scythia (Saka), Bactria (Yavana) and China (Cina).[29] The shops were overflowing with goods. Some sold Benares muslin and other fabrics. From others came the sweet smells of flowers and perfumes offered for sale. The jewellery shops were filled with items of silver, bronze and stoneware, the storehouses were full of goods of various kinds including foodstuffs.[30] The streets swarmed with hawkers of herbs, fruits and roots, and meat, fish, cakes and otherdifferent kinds of foods were offered for sale. Anyone with money could drop into an eating house for a bite. Here and there street actors, conjurers and acrobats gave performances, or professional wrestlers were locked in combat.[31]

Other Indian literary works give an even more colourful and vivid picture of life in the cities of ancient India. The *Umbhayābhisārika* describes the city of Kusumapura with its clean streets and canals enclosed between rows of houses. Mountains of flowers (sacrificial offerings by devout city-dwellers) were heaped along the streets which were lined with shops where various kinds of goods were offered for sale. Occasionally, white-faced women were seen glancing out on the streets, opening the windows of palaces as high as the

[26] Fick, 1920, p. 157.
[27] Horner, 1964, Vol. I, pp. 1–2.
[28] Ibid., pp. 171–2.
[29] Ibid., pp. Vol. II, pp. 4–5.
[30] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 2.
[31] Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 171–2.

clouds. Finely dressed royal officers went about their business on horseback, on elephants or in carriages.[32]

The *Pādatāḍitaka* recounts that the streets of the city resounded with songs, the jingle of women's jewellery, the monotonous sing-song tones of people reciting and studying the Veda, the chopping sound of axes in butcher's shops, the clatter of dishes and the screeching of domestic birds. The city was teeming with local townspeople, visitors from different provinces of India as well as foreigners, including the Sakas, Yavanas and *Tuṣāras* (Tocharians). This text also mentions that some inhabitants of Balkh (Bactra) had come to settle in the city. It notes, too, that the entrances to courtyards and the courtyards themselves were washed down regularly.[33]

Royal palaces and community walls

The residence of the ruler was located in the centre of the city, an area that also contained the more fashionable and better-built multi-storey buildings, which were not permitted to rise higher than the ruler's palace. Here, too, were many public buildings, including several picture galleries (*citraśālā*), open to the public and visited regularly. Such buildings were well constructed, special care being taken to ensure that the lighting was good. A picture gallery usually occupied a number of rooms linked together by passage-ways and staircases. The walls of the main gallery were covered with paintings of the heavenly world, episodes from the epics or astrological signs. Some galleries belonged to rich city-dwellers and some even to prosperous courtesans. The royal palaces contained magnificent picture galleries, far superior to those owned by private individuals. The *Ratnāvalī*, a seventh-century play by Harṣa, mentioned the picture gallery at the entrance to the palace. The palace had a special music room and many rooms were decorated with sculptures, carvings and paintings. Its park had ponds with small islands, on some of which there were gazebos (*Pādatāḍitaka* §33).[34]

Bazaars and dwelling-houses

The liveliest part of the city was the bazaar, bustling with shopkeepers and people selling their wares. 'Everywhere here men and women are clustering arc buying and selling'

[32] M. Ghosh, 1975, pp. 4–5.
[33] *Pādatāḍitaka* (Russian translation by I. D. Serebryakov), c§22, 24, 30, 35, 104; cf. M. Ghosh, 1975. pp. 114–15, 119, 123, 153; sec also p. 123 for a specific reference to an inhabitant of Balkh, Hariścandra, of the Kaṅkayana tribe.
[34] M. Ghosh, 1975, p. 117; see also Serebryakov's translation of the *Pādatāḍitaka*.

(*Pādatāḍitaka* §26). 'From the smithy comes the sound of the hammering; from the brazier's workshop comes the shrill whine of the lathe, and a hiss like a horse's breath as a sword is plunged into its scabbard' (*Pādatāḍitaka* §29).

Iconographic sources, supplemented by literature, provide a wealth of information on houses occupied by city-dwellers. Puri[35] notes this in relation to evidence from the sculptures of Gandhāra and Mathura. In the construction of a house, a raised terrace (*prasāda*) preceded the setting up of the walls (*kudyān*) and columns (*stambha*). The roof rafters (*gopānasi*) were of wood (*dāru*). The rooms had several windows (*gavākṣā*) and a balcony (*harmya*) was a usual feature in large houses. In the Mathura sculptures a projecting balcony with couples sitting on it is usually portrayed, as are the *dvāra* and *torana* – gate and gateways. In rooms, partitions (*bhitti*) were set up for privacy and copings (*vedikas*) ensured protection from rainwater. The highest apartment was given a special name (*kuṭagara*); houses were painted (*varṇita*); the term '*sopanam*' suggests that the ground floor was connected with the top floor by stairs; and there was a separate ladies' apartment (*antaḥpura*) inside the house. There is further interesting illustrative material in the frescoes of some of the caves at Ajanta, especially Cave XVII.[36] According to the literature, city houses (not only the palace) often had a garden in the inner courtyard (*Kāmasutra* IV.3); one such garden was to be found in the courtyard of a merchant's house.[37] The *Pañcatantra* (III.5.95) mentions a merchant's house, located in the main street of the city, standing literally on the 'royal road' (*rājamārga*). In the cities and towns, merchants usually lived in a special quarter (Fig. 9). This is clear both from literary and from archaeological sources:

> These quarters were very similar to those of today. Lines of small shops with verandas that were raised slightly above street level. Opening right on the street, they were crammed close together, separated by no more than the thickness of a post. The open fronts were closed at night with removable shutters. The merchant lived with his family on the floor above, in tiny rooms, or else in living quarters behind the shop on the other side of an inner courtyard. Throughout the day, he sat cross-legged on the wooden floor.[38]

In Udegram, every block was divided into two areas, one containing dwelling-houses, the other shops. In some cases, the shops were built in a row along the street. They were rectangular in ground plan with a small room at the back.[39] In every section of the city there was a network of alleyways, which crossed one another at right angles and divided

35 Puri, 1965, p. 98.
36 Yazdani, 1946, Plate XXIII.
37 Schlingloff, 1970, pp. 25–6.
38 Auboyer, 1965, p. 87.
39 Faccenna, 1981, p. 31.

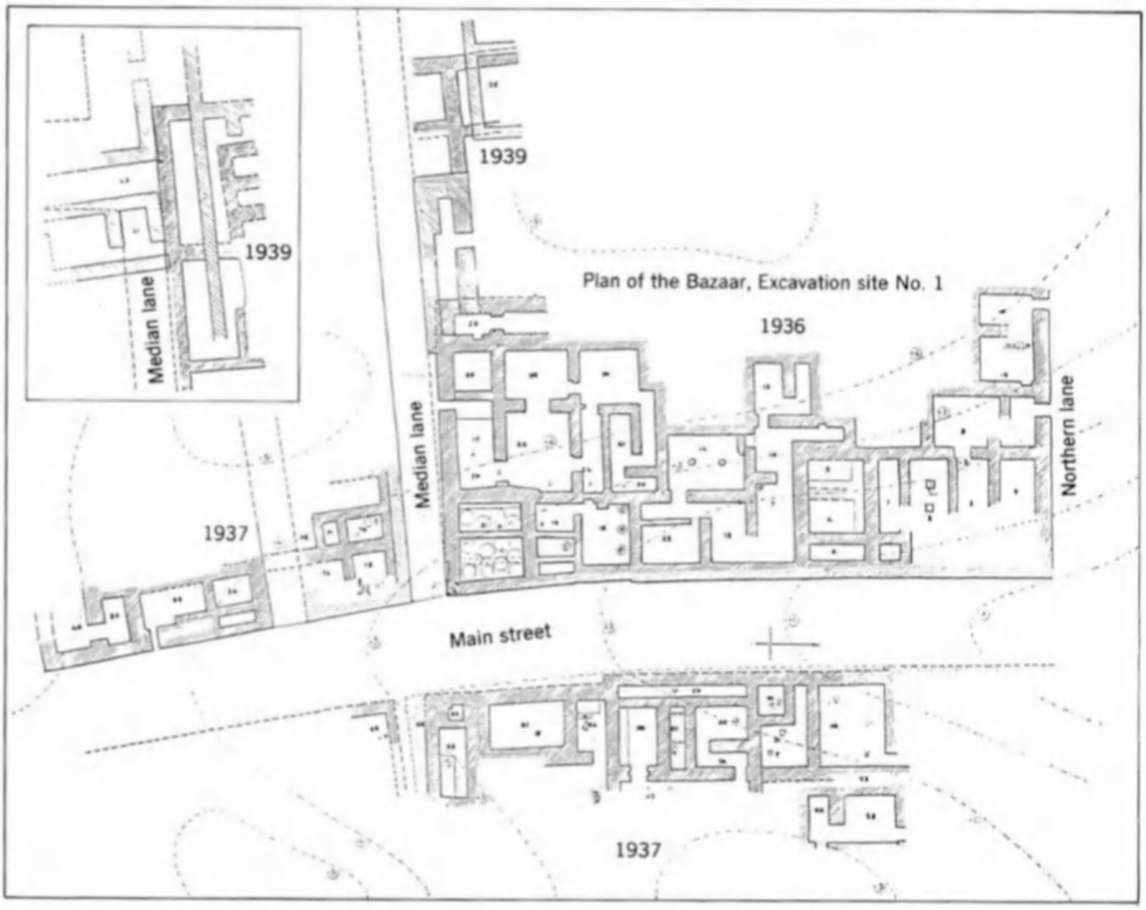


FIG. 9. Begram. Plan of the bazaar. (After Hackin et al., n.d.)

the city into blocks (eighty-one blocks were sometimes called a *pada*, a number which appears to have had ritual significance). According to Indian architectural treatises, each such block or *pada* was associated with some deity, who was the patron of the block. Again, according to the texts, each block was surrounded by a wall and enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy; it had its own water reservoirs, holy trees and temples dedicated to local deities.[40] Outside the city walls were the suburbs, which often extended over a very large area.[41]

Cities were centres of science and culture, especially fine arts and music. Many of their inhabitants were literate, and it was precisely to them that the monumental inscriptions were addressed. Specimens of the written language on metal, stone, fragments of earthenware and birch bark have survived and frequent discoveries of inkwells (at Taxila and elsewhere) provide clear evidence of the dissemination of literacy.

[40] Auboyer, 1965, pp. 120–1.
[41] Ibid., p. 125; A. Ghosh, 1973, pp. 53–6.

City administration

Indian cities were administered by a governor. Subordinate to him were the three chief magistrates. The district inspector (*gopaḥ*) was in charge of ten, twenty or forty families. He was expected to know the caste, names and occupations of all the men and women living in his district, and even how much they earned and spent. There was also a borough inspector (*sthānikaḥ*) in charge of each of the four city sections. Each of these inspectors managed the affairs of one quarter of the fortified city *(Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra* II.36.1–4).[42] The cities of Sasanian Iran also had district inspectors[43] and there is some evidence that districts were enclosed by walls. In India the municipal authorities controlled the activities of artisans and merchants. There are references to city councils and some cities had a city seal. According to Megasthenes (Strabo XV.1.51), urban life was administered by six committees, each of which consisted of five members and had its own specific functions.[44]

Information about the population of Central Asian cities during the Kushan period is very scanty, but if certain adjustments are made, information about the composition of the population of the Indian cities can probably be extrapolated to Central Asian cities as well. The documents from Nisa provide no information on the rank-and-file population of 'fortified settlements' (*diz* in Parthian). In these documents the commandant of a *diz* is referred to as a *dizpat*. It is clear from the material in the highly specialized Nisa archives[45] that cities, especially larger ones, were inhabited by members of the aristocracy, the clergy and officials of the complex administrative apparatus. The high three-towered castle at Toprak-kala, the citadel of Bactra and the splendour of the palaces in other cities constitute clear and unambiguous evidence of the importance of the aristocracy in the life of the period.[46]

The Kara-tepe inscriptions show that where Buddhism was widespread, an important role was played by Buddhist monks and officials of the Buddhist religious community (*saṅgha*). An equal if not more important role was of course played by the numerically larger Zoroastrian priesthood. The population in many cities included a number of foreigners. Harmatta[47] has calculated that some 30 per cent of the names found in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions in India were Iranian, and Bactrian names predominate. Urasaka, a Bactrian from Noacha who was an official of the Kushan administration, notes in an inscription from

42 Kangle, 1972, p. 185.
43 Perikhanyan, 1973, pp. 393, 496.
44 Bongard-Levin, 1973, pp. 197–202.
45 D'yakonov and Livshits, 1968, 1977.
46 Livshits, 1984, pp. 265–79.
47 Harmatta, 1964, pp. 387–8; cf. Livshits, 1969, p. 64.

Taxila that he built a Buddhist shrine there.[48] The *Milindapañha* (V.331), the *Mahābhārata* (11.47.15–31) and other sources provide information about Bactrians and persons from other parts of Central Asia who reached or lived in India. The situation was similar in the cities of Central Asia. Buddhist missionaries and pilgrims, merchants, representatives of the Kushan administration, soldiers and possibly craftsmen from India settled in the Central Asian towns and travelled beyond the borders of the Kushan state. In the finds at Termez we see evidence of scribes who had an excellent knowledge of north-western Prakrit and a thorough command of written Kharoṣṭhī. It is not possible to say whether they were Indians or Bactrians who had been well schooled in these languages, but in view of the role played by north-western Prakrit in the administration of the Kushan state and the life of the Buddhist communities, it seems probable that they included both local inhabitants and Indians. In both Central Asia and India, Sanskrit written in Brāhmī script is found.[49]

There are noticeable similarities in architectural styles. Some of these are due to the fact that in both India and Central Asia there was a Hellenistic element in the substratum of Kushan culture. A particularly striking example is provided by the form of stone columns, even though during the Kushan period the form of columns in India and Central Asia developed in substantially different ways. Other similarities were due to the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia and the adaptation to Buddhist religious architecture which, under the influence of local architectural and building traditions, assumed new forms and incorporated design solutions that were unknown in India. The synthesis of Iranian, Central Asian and Indian architectural and religious ideas gave fresh impetus to the concept of a shrine with corridors, and we know that Indian experts went to Central Asia to design and build Buddhist shrines.[50]

The *Sūtrālaṃkāra* (IV.21) tells the story of a pious artist from Puṣkalāvatī whojourneyed to the land of Aśmaka (land of stone) where he decorated a Buddhist monastery. Tradition has it that the *Sūtrālaṃkāra* was the work of the famous Aśvaghoṣa, a contemporary of Kanishka or of Kumāralāta, the founder of the school of Sautrāntika, which also dates to the second century A.D. and this should be the content of the story. The toponym 'land of stone' refers to somewhere in the north-west, probably in Central Asia. Some elements of Central Asian architectural and building styles made their way into India,[51] and decorative art in architecture reflected the synthesis that was occurring between the Indian, Bactrian

48 Konow, 1929, pp. 74–5; Litvinsky, 1968, pp. 13–14.
49 Vorob'eva-Desyatovskaya, 1974, pp. 118–20;
50 Litvinsky and Zeimal, 1971, pp. 113, 145.
51 The Pādatāḍitaka (§52) tells of the embellishment of the courtesans' district with a 'mobile sanctury from north Bactria', cf. M. Ghosh, 1975 p. 131.

and Hellenistic-Roman styles.[52] The construction of Buddhist religious buildings greatly affected the appearance of Indian and Central Asian cities, Buddhist stupas giving some of them a very characteristic vertical skyline. Common features can be observed in the nature and design of municipal service systems. Taxila, Dalverzin-tepe and the Chim-kurgan site all have the same type of underground sewerage system.

Cities were still political and administrative centres as hitherto, but their role as the focal point of handicrafts and economic life in general increased considerably. Merv, for example, possessed copper and bronze works, bone-carving workshops, armouries, flour mills, textile, ceramics and other industries, as also did Termez, Samarkand, Toprak-kala, Dalverzin-tepe and other cities of Central Asia. In ancient India, according to the written sources, various groups of the population, including craftsmen, had their homes in strictly delimited areas of the city. Their workshops were located in their houses. The streets of Taxila were lined with rows of buildings whose lower floors contained ateliers or shops facing the street. The same was true of Bhita and in Central Asian towns such as Toprak-kala, Merv and Saksan-Okhur.

Craftsmen and guilds

Indian craftsmanship during this period was highly specialized. Among the variouscategories of metal-workers, the *Milindapañha* mentions blacksmiths, goldsmiths, silversmiths, lead-workers, tinsmiths, coppersmiths, iron-workers, metallurgical craftsmen, and even gold assayers.[53] The *Mahāvastu* (III.113.442–3) mentions tin-smelters, skilled lead-workers, copper-smelters, etc. Crafts involved in the production of weapons were of special importance. The sources do not speak of 'armourers' in general, but refer separately to makers of bows and makers of bow-strings.[54] The sources of this period mention (and in some cases even list) a large number of trades. The *Mahāvastu* (III.113.442–3) refers to thirty-six types of craftsman. The *Milindapañha* lists seventy-four kinds of occupation, most of them in the productive category. The *Jātakas* mention the names of eighteen guilds (*śreṇi*) of craftsmen and merchants.[55] The number eighteen is the traditional figure, but a comparison of various sources indicates that there were as many as thirty guilds.

[52] Sharma, 1968, pp. 34–5.
[53] Horner, 1964, Vol. II, p. 171–2; See also Puri, 1965, pp. 110–11; Adhya, 1966.
[54] Horner, 1964, Vol. II, pp. 171–2;.
[55] This number is cited in the *Mahāvastu*. The term *śreṇi*, already present in the Vedic literature, had the general meaning of 'group'. By the time of the *Kauṭilya* it meant specifically 'corporation' or 'guild' (Kane, 1941, p. 66).

There is some reason to believe that all members of a guild lived in the same area; for example, there are references to an ivory-carvers' street (*Jātakas* 1.320; II.197), a carpet-makers' village, a potters' village, a weavers' village and a stone-polishers' village.[56] The *Jātakas* refer often to the *vaḍḍhakigama* (carpenters' village). One of them had a population of 500 carpenters and another 1,000, in which there was one chief for 500 carpenters. They collected wood from the forest to make the wooden components for different types of buildings. When their work was completed, they went to the forest again to collect more raw material.[57]

Professions were hereditary; thus, in the Pali texts, the word 'son of a smith' issynonymous with the word 'smith'. This is also borne out by epigraphic materials. References to the hereditary nature of the crafts arc found in the writings of Kālidāsa. The heads of the guilds were noted by a number of terms: *pramukha* (chief), *mahattama* (head man), *jyeṣṭhaka* (senior). According to the inscriptions, an elder was known as the *śreṣṭhin* (best one). In theory, only a person who had achieved the highest level of skill in his trade could become an elder. The guild heads had their own personal seals bearing their name and the title of *śreṣṭhin*; they were assisted by agents and a secretary (*kāyastha*). The guild heads regulated working conditions and rates of pay. In consultation with the heads of other guilds, they raised or lowered their prices, depending on circumstances. In many cases the elder managed the funds of the local branch of the guild, the guild assuming aggregate liability for all its members. The head was in charge of security and had a special armed detachment to protect guild property and funds and to escort caravans. The guilds probably had special premises for their administrators, and special banners and ceremonial badges that members wore on festive occasions.

Some guilds were very rich and possessed real-estate, including some buildings and large temple-complexes. In the first century A.D., some skilled ivory-carvers from Vidiśā (near Bhopal) donated money for building the *toraṇa* of a stupa at Sanchi, one of the great masterpieces of ancient Indian sculpture. In the fifth century A.D., silk-weavers from Daśapura had sufficient resources to build the Sun Temple there, and thirty-five years later paid for necessary repairs. An inscription from Nasik mentions a potters' guild, an oil merchants' corporation and a water-carriers' guild, all of which had made large financial donations. The head of the guild enjoyed high social status and was sometimes a dignitary of the royal court. The state supported the guilds and protected their rights and property. In written sources rulers are warned not to interfere with the customs of the guilds, and

[56] Geiger, 1960, p. 104.
[57] Misra, 1975.

to confirm their status. The ruler should only interfere if their usages and procedures were violated.

The guilds in turn performed specific public duties. At the time of official cityceremonies, craftsmen and the heads of their guilds stood alongside the aristocracy and the Brahmans (*Mahāvastu* III.442). In one of the fables of the *Pañcatantra*, it is said that in Vardhamāna, 'royal and municipal affairs' were directed by Dantila, 'chief of the merchants', who 'meted out punishment and distributed awards'. From the text of the *Arthaśāstra* (XI.1.4) some scholars are of the opinion that the guilds provided soldiers. It is clear that armed detachments, who protected guild property in peace-time, were placed at the disposal of the state during war. It is also known from the epics that the guilds were regarded as one of the pillars of state authority.[58] The few literary sources that are available for Central Asia contain no information on craftsmen's guilds, though it is known that they existed in Iran under the Sasanians, and excavations in Central Asia show that the various groups of craftsmen, potters, millers and smiths were each established in clearly demarcated quarters of the city. It is possible that the organization of the guilds was not so formalized in Central Asia as it was in India.

The 'Palamedes inscription' at Surkh Kotal, written in Bactrian, included at the end the Greek name 'Palamedes' in the genitive. Harmatta[59] concludes that the signature was deliberately added by the architect, who was anxious to receive credit for his work. Harmatta also notes three Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of the Kushan period from India to which, in his view, the persons in charge of construction had deliberately added their names. From all this he draws interesting conclusions about the growth of social awareness among the artisan and merchant classes in the Kushan state. The inscribing of architects' names on buildings was a reflection of the high social standing they enjoyed at that time.

The output of handicraft wares was abundant, varied and of the highest quality. This was made possible because of the high standard and complex technology of the equipment and tools available. The metal-working industry provided the city and rural areas with tools, household wares, ornaments and weapons. One branch, the jewellery trade, produced gold, silver, bronze and brass ornaments, with some decorative inlays. The jewellery and torcutics of the Kushan period were noted for their high artistic standard and many were genuine works of art. The textile, pottery, wood-working and other trades were very highly

[58] See Rhys Davids, 1901, pp. 862–7; Fick, 1920, pp. 275–80; Kane, 1941, pp. 66–9; Puri, 1965, pp. 106–7; Adhya, 1966, pp. 82–8; Upadhyaya, 1947, pp. 268–9; Chakraborti, 1966, pp. 315–28; Auboyer, 1965, pp. 102–5. Between the fifth and seventh centuries, legal documents indicate that the guilds had written statutes and were obliged to have their own premises where their members could meet. The sources of that time provide detailed descriptions of their functions, statutes and administration (Chakraborti, 1966, pp. 328–37).

[59] Harmatta, 1964, pp. 338–9.

developed; so, too, were the building trades and the related architectural and decorative arts – carving in stone and alabaster, wood-carving, painting, etc. The extraction of minerals was also widely practised; handicraft production in the various provinces of the Kushan Empire was very diversified and individual provinces were noted for producing specific types of articles. Local schools of craftsmen developed distinctive local styles, though some ware was common to several provinces.

Trade and commerce

The high rate of marketable output of urban production, the need for exchange of goods between cities and their agricultural environment and territorial differences were the factors that led to the extensive growth of trade within cities and between the provinces of the Kashan state. According to Indian sources, there were two types of merchants: the *vaṇik* (those who had regular shops) and the *sārthavāha* (caravan traders). The caravan traders also had their elders. Because of poor roads and the dangers that might be encountered along them, including attacks by bandits, the caravan trade found that large, well-equipped and well-protected caravans were safest; the *Milindapañha* mentions a merchant who travelled to Pāṭaliputra with a train of 500 wagons. During the Kushan period, according to *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* and Indian sources, merchant vessels also sailed the high seas and, taking advantage of the monsoon winds, crossed the Indian Ocean.[60]

Trade between the different provinces of the Kushan state is well documented byarchaeological finds in Central Asia. Articles imported from the Indian provinces included ivoryware, precious stones, jewellery and other ornamental objects. But trade was not confined to the provinces as its maritime and overland routes linked the Kushan Empire to the Mediterranean, the Far East, the wooded steppes and South-East Asia. The movement of goods and cultural treasures was a two-way process, creating opportunities for cultural cross-fertilization in the areas of thought, art, architecture and material production.

[60] Puri, 1965, pp. 107–8; Frisk, 1974; Warmington, 1974; Thorley, 1969; Schmitthenner 1979.

14

RELIGIONS IN THE KUSHAN EMPIRE*

J. Harmatta, B. N. Puri, L. Lelekov, S. Humayun and D. C. Sircar

Contents

Religious life in Bactria before the Kushan conquest

On the eve of the nomadic invasions of the second century B.C. religious life in Bactria and the adjacent territories was characterized by a number of religious beliefs and cults of different origin. Zoroastrianism played an important role among the Iranian-speaking population, and the teaching of Zoroaster had conquered the eastern Iranian territories before Alexander's conquest[1] even though many remains of pre-Zoroastrian religious ideas and cults probably survived. The traditions of pre-Zoroastrian Iranian religion, however, prevailed in the territories north of the Oxus and to a greater extent among the Iranian nomadic tribes of the steppes. The Zoroastrian calendar had already been adopted in Persia, Parthia, Bactria and Chorasmia, [2] while the Sogdian system of month names

* See Map 4
[1] Gnoli, 1980, pp. 215 et seq., pp. 227 et seq.
[2] Harmatta, 1969, pp. 369 et seq.

differs because the majority of pre-Zoroastrian month names were maintained in Sogdiana. In any case there seem to have been some major differences between original Zoroastrianism and later Zoroastrian orthodoxy. The latter, with its iconoclastic tendency which appeared at the end of the Arsacid age, never became firmly established on the territory of eastern Iran, though later, under the influence of Kartir (Kirder), the *mobed*, great efforts were made to strengthen Zoroastrian ecclesiastical organization and orthodoxy – resulting in the persecution of Christianity, Buddhism and other religions.

At the time of the nomadic invasions, however, Zoroastrian orthodoxy did not yet exist in Bactria. On the contrary, a considerable number of Greek settlers living in the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom formed religious communities worshipping their own gods and practising their own cults. Archaeological finds and the coinage of the Graeco-Bactrian kings attest to worship of the major Greek divinities: Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, Helios, Heracles, Dionysus, the Dioscuri, Athena, Artemis, Hecate and Nike. Greek and Iranian religious ideas and cults influenced each other, while Greek religious architecture and art influenced the building of sanctuaries and created the iconography for Iranian deities.

In eastern Iran, as everywhere, the Greeks attempted to understand local religious ideas and to identify local divinities with Greek ones (*interpretatio Graeca*). Zeus was identified with Ahura Mazda, Heracles with Verethragna, Apollo and Helios with Mithra, Artemis with Nana. The Greek interpretation of Iranian divinities to a great extent determined their iconography. Apparently Greek forms of religious worship even influenced Iranian cults. This can be seen in the Greek votive inscription from the sanctuary of the god Oxus at Takht-i Sangin. The inscription was incised on a little stone altar with the bronze figure of Marsyas playing a two-branched flute. The donor bears the Iranian name **Ātrosauka*[3] and dedicated his votive present to the god Vaxśu (Oxus). Here, both the believer and the god are Iranian, but the form of worship (the votive altar with the bronze figure of Marsyas and the dedicatory inscription) is Greek, excellent evidence for Graeco-Iranian syncretism in the religious life of Graeco-Bactria.

The spread of Indian religions also began under Graeco-Bactrian rulers at this period. According to the testimony of the Greek and Aramaic versions of the rock edicts of Aśoka (see Chapter 16), the beginning of Buddhist missions to Bactria dates back to the third century B.C. The spread of Buddhism and Brahmanism was due to Indian merchants and craftsmen emigrating to the great centres of Graeco-Bactria (see Chapter 17 and the inscription of the potter Punyamitra from Begram). The Greeks were also open to Indian religious ideas as is attested by the pillar inscription of Heliodoros, the ambassador of King

[3] Litvinsky and Sedov, 1984, p 61.

Antialcidas who became a worshipper of Vishnu and erected the Garuda pillar with an inscription in Brāhmī in honour of Vishnu at Besnagar.

Local cults like that of the Oxus played an important role among the Iranian, Indian, Dardic and Kafiri population. The Graeco-Bactrian kings were all aware of the importance of these local cults and sometimes represented an important local god or goddess on their coins. The 'City-Goddess of Kāpiśa' appears on the coins of a late Eucratides in the form of a female deity wearing a turreted crown and seated on a throne. The representation of this city-deity can be compared to that of Zeus seated on the throne (i.e. it is Greek in character), but the elephant to the left and the *caitya* to the right clearly refer to an Indian religious sphere. Thus, if the altar of Ātrosauka furnishes an excellent case for Gracco-Indian religious syncretism, then the figure of the city-deity of Kāpiśa provides first-class testimony for the amalgamation of Graeco-Indian religious ideas. Iranian, Greek and Indian religious cults existed side by side, influencing each other with their rich religious ideas and forms of worship and resulting in religious syncretism which continued to influence religious life after the establishment of Kushan rule in Bactria.

The ancient religion of the Sakas and Kushans

When the Saka and Yüeh-chih tribes arrived in Bactria, they must have had their own religious ideas and cults. For lack of relevant direct evidence, however, it is an arduous task to form an idea of their ancient religion. There can be hardly any doubt that the ancient religion of the Sakas and Kushans was not Zoroastrianism. In spite of some uncertainty in identifying the lands in the list of lands in the first chapter of the *Videvdāt*,[4] it is clear that neither the former dwelling place of the Sakas nor the ancient home of the Yüeh-chih belonged to the territories where Zoroastrianism spread at an early date. Thus, Saka *urmaysde* (sun), going back to Old Iranian **Ahura-mazdāh-*, cannot be used as evidence for the Zoroastrianism of the Saka tribes. On the contrary, it shows that the name **Ahura-mazdāh-* is pre-Zoroastrian, and this is confirmed by the occurrence in Assyrian sources of the form *Asara Mazas* which reflects the Proto-Iranian form **Asura mazdās-* of the name *Ahura-mazdāh-*.

The Saka and the Assyrian evidence clearly supports the assumption that **Asuramazdās-* was a pre-Zoroastrian divinity of the Iranian tribes with a strong solar character which led to the semantic development *Ahura-mazdāh-* > *urmaysde* 'sun' in Saka.[5] Consequently, there can hardly be any doubt that the Kushans already worshipped Ahura Mazda before

4 Gnoli, 1980, pp. 23 et seq.
5 Steblin-Kamenskiy, 1981, p. 238.

their acquaintance with Zoroastrianism in form of a god of heaven with strong solar features. Beside Ahura Mazda the pre-Zoroastrian worship of Mithra, Aryaman, Vayu, Aša, Yama, Verethragna, Spenta Ārmaitiš and the cult of Hauma are attested by linguistic evidence. It is questionable, however, whether the same religious ideas, gods and cults existed throughout all the extensive territory inhabited by the Iranian tribes in pre-Zoroastrian times. It seems, for example, that the worship of Mithra, Aryaman, Vayu and Yama was not known among the Iranian nomads of Central Asia and was consequently also unknown among the Sakas and Kushans, while the cult of Ahura Mazda and Spenta Ārmaitiš can probably be assumed on the basis of Saka *urmaysde* 'sun' and *śśandrāmata* 'name of a goddess'.

Differences in religion between the Iranian nomadic peoples are clearly shown by Herodotus who attests the worship of Zeus, Ge, Apollo, Aphrodite Urania, Poseidon, Heracles and Ares (according to the *interpretatio Graeca*) among the Scythians (IV. 59), while he emphasizes (I.216) that the Massagetae of Central Asia only worship the sun. Consequently the pre-Zoroastnari religion, which we deduce from the evidence of common Indo-Iranian (Avestan and Rigvedic) religious terminology, probably flourished only in the eastern territories, adjacent to the area inhabited by the ancient Indian tribes, while the religion of the northern Iranian nomads living in eastern Europe and Central Asia may have had other peculiar features.

Thus, instead of the cult of Hauma, the cult of Hemp is attested among the Scythian tribes. On the basis of Pashto *ōmə*, 'name of a plant', Munji *yūmenä*, 'name of a plant' (< **haumana*-), Wakhī *yimĭk*, 'Ephedra' (< **haumaka*-, cf. *yīr* 'sun' < **hūr*) again we can perhaps count with the existence among the eastern Iranian tribes, Sakas and Kushans of the Hauma cult in pre-Zoroastrian times. Vayu is attested by Ossetian *vayuk*, 'giant, devil' (< **vayuka*-) and the Alanian personal name *Vayuk* (inscription of Ladánybene, fourth century A.D. in runic script) for the north-western Iranian nomads. On the other hand the north-eastern tribes preserved a rich pre-Zoroastrian religious terminology, surviving in Khotan Saka, Southern Saka and in the language of the Kushans (see Chapter 16). The most important are the following: Khotan Saka *vvuva*-, 'god' < *βaya*-, *gyays*-, *jays*-, 'to sacrifice', *gyasta*-, 'god'; Southern Saka *jasta*-, 'god' < **yazata*-; Khotan Saka *dyū*-, 'demon' < **daiva*-, which also was known according to the testimony of Ossetic *äv-deu* 'evil spirit', among the north-western Iranian nomads.

Essentially the Sakas and Kushans who invaded Graeco-Bactria may have had similar religious ideas and cults to the population of Sogdiana and Bactria in pre-Zoroastrian times. They probably worshipped *Ahuramazdāh* as 'God of Heaven' with solar features and *Śvantā Ārmatī* as 'Goddess of Earth'. They were acquainted with several categories

of divine beings such as *daivas*, *yazatas* and *bagas*; and used the verb *yaz-* as a term for sacrifice and worship, and the words *baga-spāsika-* and *bagana-pati-* to denote different categories of priests.

The epoch of the Kushan *yabghus*

When the Sakas and Kushans conquered the Graeco-Bactrian territories north of the Oxus, they found manifestations of Greek religious life, religious architecture, sculpture, ideas and worship. If the first centre of the Kushan *yabghu* can really be identified with Khalchayan in the Surkhan Darya valley, the finds discovered there will enable us to follow step by step the formation and development of the religious life and religious policy of the Kushan rulers. On the coins of the first-known Kushan *yabghu*, Sanab, the spelling *HIAOY*, previously read erroneously as *Heraiou* or *Miaiou*, is not the name, but the title of the ruler, and should be read as *hyau*, representing the most archaic form of the title *yau*, *yavu*, *yabgu*. Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, already appears. Apparently the Kushan aristocracy tried to adopt the royal ideology of the Graeco-Bactrian kings and its religious implications. It is therefore no accident that in the sculptural decoration of the Kushan manor-house at Khalchayan the enthroned ruler and his wife appear again with Nike.[6] It is a remarkable fact that Nike is represented in the company of a bearded god with a radiate halo and the Hellenistic Mithra. Beside Nike and the bearded god, a sculpture of Athena was also discovered at Khalchayan. If the bearded god can be identified with Zeus, who also has a radiate halo on the local copies of coins of Heliocles, then we obtain an interesting insight into Graeco-Bactrian–Kushan religious syncretism. Zeus with a radiate halo was obviously interpreted as the pre-Zoroastrian Kushan–Saka Ahura Mazda of solar character, that is, the Greek sculptor created an iconography that expressed both Graeco-Bactrian and Kushan religious ideas. It is noteworthy that beside the Greek winged Nike and the Graeco-Kushan Zeus/Ahura Mazda, the Hellenistic Mithra represents a third type of Graeco-Iranian syncretism. The Kushans may already have been acquainted with the cult of Mithra in Sogdiana before they invaded Bactria proper, because the name of an Iranian noble (*Sisi-miθra-*, 'devoted to Mithra') provides evidence for the cult of Mithra on territory north of the Oxus in the time of Alexander the Great. The figure of Mithra wearing a Phrygian cap from Khalchayan recalls the representation of the Western Mithra – the Graeco-Roman Mithras – and was the result of Graeco-Iranian syncretism which the sculptor adapted to the Kushan Mithra. The presence of Nike on coins of Sanab, the first Kushan *yabghu*, and in his manor-house at Khalchayan is clear evidence for the existence

6 Pugachenkova, 1966, p. 187.

of a goddess of victory who was called either Nike or Vanindo in the royal ideology of the Kushan rulers before the rise of the Great Kushans.

The coinage of the next Kushan ruler, Kujula Kadphises, enables us to see how thereligious horizon of the Kushans was enlarged. His first issue, which has the debased portrait and name of Hermaeus on the obverse, shows Heracles on the reverse, still following the Greek tradition, even though Heracles may be the *interpretatio Graeca* of the Iranian god Verethragna. On the reverse, however, the legend is already written in Kharoṣṭhī script: *Kujula Kasasa Kuṣana yavugasa dhramaṭhidasa* 'of Kujula Kasa, the Kushan *yabghu*, who is steadfast in the Law'. The epithet *dhramaṭhida*- < *dharmasṭhita*- 'steadfast in the Law' of Kujula Kadphises occurs in fuller form in the legend of a later issue, namely *sacadhramathiṭa*- < *satyadharmasthita*- 'steadfast in the true Law'. Contrary to earlier assumptions, which regarded Kujula Kadphises as Buddhist on the basis of this epithet, it is now clear from the wording of a Mathura inscription, [7]in which Huvishka bears the same epithet *satyadharmasthita* that the kingdom was conferred upon him by Śarva and Śscaṃḍavira (*Caṇḍavīra*), that is, he was a devotee of Śiva. It is striking to see that Kujula Kadphises has already adopted the worship of Śiva and the use of Kharoṣṭhī script at such an early date. We must not, however, forget that the spread of Indian religious ideas and cults to the north-west as well as the use of Gāndhārī Prakrit and Kharoṣṭhī script had already begun under the Graeco-Bactrians. The Indo–Greeks from the time of Apollodotus I, Antimachus and Menander had regularly struck coins with Gāndhārī Prakrit legends and the later Eucratides had used the city-goddess of Kāpiśa as a reverse coin type.

The spread of Indian religions, scripts and languages to Bactria presupposes themigration there of Indian merchants and craftsmen. They were attracted by the quickly developing new Graeco-Bactrian cities and the favourable prospects of long-distance trade opened up by the Greek kingdom of Bactria and later by the Kushans. If the importance of trade between India and Pontus was already clear to Antiochus I, the decisive significance of trade between India and China through Central Asia must have been even clearer for the Graeco-Bactrian and Kushan rulers. This explains their ambition to acquire and control the Silk Route. According to the report of Aristobulos (quoted by Strabo XI.7.3), the Oxus river was navigable and many Indian goods were transported on it as far as the Hyrcanian Sea, and from there to Albania and the Pontic region. The importance of Indian trade down the Oxus river and the activity of Indian merchants and craftsmen along this important trading route gave the Kushan *yabghus* strong reason to prefer Indian religious worship and to use Indian scripts and languages. The share of Indian merchants was also important in the silk trade between India and China, which began to flourish from just this period.

[7] Lüders, 1961, pp. 138 et seq.

From the first century B.C., corporations of Indian merchants were formed in Xumdān, the Chinese capital, clear evidence of the close trading relations between these two great and rich nations. When the Kushans conquered Transoxania they became masters of the initial section of the Silk Route, and it was almost a historical necessity that Kujula Kadphises, the founder of the Kushan Empire, began to prefer the cult of Śiva. None the less, Greek religious ideas and Greek religious iconography remained important for the Kushan dynasty. When, after his victories, Kujula Kadphises assumed the title *mahārāja rājatirāja* (Great King, King of Kings) in his coin legends, he used the winged Nike as the reverse type of the issue.

Religious life under Vima Kadphises

At the time when Vima Kadphises became Kushan emperor, religious life can becharacterized by two interesting features. One is the adoption of the forms of Greek religious art and the Greek iconographic interpretation of Kushan divinities. It is very likely that the Kushan gods Ohromazdo, Vanindo, Mihro and Ořlagno lie behind the Greek iconographical garb of Zeus, Nike, Mithra and Heracles – further evidence for the strong influence of Greek religious ideas and forms before the rise of the Great Kushans. The other striking feature is the strong orientation towards Indian religions and the worship of Śiva in particular. It is, therefore, not surprising that the cult of Śiva became even more prominent under Vima Kadphises, who conquered considerable territories in India. His coinage gives clear evidence of this, as Śiva, or Śiva with Nandi, appears as the reverse type of all his issues.

In some coin legends Vima has the epithet *maheśvara* which, being a typical name of Śiva, can hardly be taken in the sense of 'the great lord' and refer to Vima himself; but as Kharoṣṭhī script did not indicate long vowels, it can more probably be interpreted as *māheśvara* 'worshipper of Śiva'. Archaeological and epigraphic finds also attest the leaning of Vima towards the cult of Śiva. At Dil-berjin, the temple of the Dioscuri, built in Graeco-Bactrian times, was transformed by Vima Kadphises into a sanctuary of Śiva and decorated with a wall-painting representing Śiva and Parvatī (see Chapter 15, Fig. 9). According to the fragmentary Bactrian inscription D 1 (see Chapter 17), Vima Kadphises probably had the wall-painting of Oēṣo (Śiva) prepared, and gave orders that the priest of the stronghold and the master of the hunt should take care of the sanctuary and cult. It is clear from the long Bactrian inscription D 2 (see Chapter 17) that Vima Kadphises probably had craftsmen brought from Ujjayinī (modern Ujjain) to construct a water conduit to the sanctuary of Śiva. According to the Bactrian inscription DN 1, Vima Kadphises again ordered the town Andēzo (Lrapho = Qunduz) to retain the tax

it collected and use it for the sanctuary and the warlike divinity (see Chapter 17). The fragmentary Brāhmī inscription on the pedestal of a statue from Tōkrī Tīlā, near Mat, speaks more precisely about the relation between the god Śiva and the Kushan king: ... *satyadharmasthitasyananayatsarvaścaṃḍavīrātisṛṣṭarājyasya* ... 'who is steadfast in the true Law, on whom, on account of his devotion, the kingdom was conferred by Sarva and Ścaṃḍavira'.[8] Thus, the Kushan king ascribed his rise to power to Sarva (= Śiva) and Caṇḍavīra (who may be the same god as Candīśvara, the god of the Mahākāla temple at Ujjain, probably a special form of Śiva). Because the circle of gods around Śiva have a warlike character, it is very likely that the phrase *iazado i karisaro* 'the warlike divinity' also denoted Śiva.

This devotion of Vima Kadphises to Śiva could have both personal and politicalreasons. The great commander and conqueror may himself have felt an attraction towards the warlike god Śiva and the war-gods in his ambience. It is noteworthy that Vima bears the epithet *mahozinigo* 'protégé of the moon [god]' in his inscription DN 1 (see Chapter 17), and it seems that originally the divine patron of the Kushan dynasty was the ancient Iranian moon god. In view of the close connection between Śiva and the moon, dynastic religious ideas may have also suggested to Vima the choice of Śiva as his divine patron. In political terms, both in the preparations for his Indian campaign and during the campaign itself Vima Kadphises may have received valuable support from groups of the Indian population who worshipped Śiva. A number of Indian settlements already existed on the territory of eastern Iran at the time, and the Parthian ostraca from Nisa show that there was an Indian settlement called Hindu-gān in the neighbourhood of the ancient Parthian capital. Consequently the support of the Indian population of his kingdom may have been important for Vima both before and during his Indian campaign. The emergence of Caṇḍavīra/Candīśvara, the god of the Mahākāla temple at Ujjain, among the divine patrons of Vima probably bears witness to the assistance he received from the priesthood of Śiva there. The mention of 'Ujjayinī' in his inscription D2 reflects the importance of relations with Ujjain and its cult of Śiva, maintained by Vima Kadphises even after his Indian campaign

A peculiar feature of the iconography of Śiva adopted for the reverse on coins of Vima Kadphises permits us to think of some local factors in the spread of the cult. On some of Vima's coins Śiva is shown with tongues of flame rising from his head, a phenomenon otherwise unknown in Śiva iconography. The male figure with five–rayed head, on the reverse of the early issues of the Mithra kings of Pañcāla, is clearly different and cannot have been a model for the flaming-head Śiva on coins of Vima Kadphises. In Indian mythology, it is the god Yama who was imagined with flaming hair. Moreover, it should be remembered

[8] Lüders, 1961, pp. 138 et scq.

that Yama (*Imrā* < *Yama rājā*) is the principal god of the Kafir tribes. We must therefore reckon with the possibility that the iconography of Śiva was also influenced by local religious ideas, belonging originally to Yama, worshipped by the local Kafirs, and that this syncretism also contributed to the spread of his cult.

The Kushan kings derived their royal power from divine patrons, and so they were charismatic kings, human incarnations of divine might and power. As a consequence of their charisma, they also became objects of divine worship in dynastic sanctuaries. Vima Kadphises began the construction of two such centres of the royal cult, one at Mat, near Mathura, the other in Surkh Kotal. The construction of the sanctuary[9] at Mat was executed by Humaṣpala, the *baganapati* (curator of the temple), according to the record incised between the feet of a colossal seated figure of Vima Kadphises, whose name appears in the form Vema Takpisa (earlier reading, Vema Takṣuma). The same form of his name also occurs in the Bactrian inscription DH 1 (Ooēmo Takpiso). Beside the temple, a garden, a tank, a well, an assembly hall and a gateway were constructed. In Surkh Kotal, however, only the preparatory work began during the reign of Vima. According to the unfinished inscription (SK 2, see Chapter 17), he had a canal dug there to assure the water supply for building operations, which were probably continued and finished by his successor Kanishka.

The religious policy of Kanishka I

The accession of Kanishka marked essential changes in the religious life of the Kushan kingdom. While in the interest of his Indian conquest, Vima Kadphises had given preference to the worship of Śiva in his religious policy, his successor Kanishka put Bactria and its Iranian religious cults at the centre of his religious policy. He continued and finished building the dynastic sanctuary at Surkh Kotal. If the restoration of the fragmentary building inscription (monumental wall inscription SK 1) is correct, the construction of the stronghold and the great staircase as well as Temple A was finished in four years. The sanctuary bore the name 'Kanishka Oanindo-sanctuary' but according to the Bactrian inscriptions SK 4A, 4B, 4M this name was only given later, in Year 31, when the sanctuary was renovated and enlarged (see Chapter 17). So Temple A may originally have been used for the cult of the dynastic divinities on the reverse of his first coin issues, namely, Helios, Selene, Hephaistos and Nanaia.

[9] Called *devakula* in the building inscription; see Lüders, 1961, p. 135.

While the first issues minted by Kanishka still bore Greek legends, they weresubsequently replaced by Bactrian legends. Correspondingly, instead of the Greek gods the Iranian Micro, Mao, Aθṣo and Nana appeared.

In this phenomenon we do not have a change in the religious cult of the Kushan royal court, merely the omission of the Greek interpretation of their dynastic gods. The representation of Mioro, Mao, Aθṣo and Nana is identical with the earlier forms of Helios, Selene, Hephaistos and Artemis Nanaia. The coincidence is particularly striking in the case of Selene, who appears as a male divinity, with the iconography of the Greek moon goddess applied to the male Iranian moon god. Obviously, the Kushan Helios, Selene, Hephaistos and Nanaia do not represent the Greek deities Helios, Selene, Hephaistos and Nanaia, but are the Iranian gods Mihro, Maho, Aθṣo and Nana, divine patrons of the Kushan dynasty, who appeared according to the *interpretatio Graeca* bearing Greek divine names and in Greek iconography.

The first of them, Mihro, was already represented at Khalchayan as patron god of the first Kushan *yabghu*, Sanab. On the basis of the epithet *mahozinigo*, borne by Vima Kadphises in the Bactrian inscription DN 1 'protégé of the moon god', Maho also belonged to the group of the Kushan dynastic deities. As concerns Aθṣo-Hephaistos, probably the Kushans also had their dynastic fire as did the Arsacids and Sasanians, and this was placed on the platform of Temple A at Surkh Kotal. Possibly the dynastic fire cult was taken over by the Kushans from the Arsacids in the same manner as the title 'King of Kings'.[10]

The origin of Nana worship points in the same direction. According to the evidence of the Parthian ostraca from Nisa, a Nana sanctuary also existed in the ancient Parthian capital and royal residence. Very probably the cult of Nana arrived from Parthia. The evidence for the Nana sanctuary at Nisa is scanty and does not throw any direct light on the relation of the Nana cult to the Arsacid dynasty, but the existence of a Nana sanctuary in the Parthian royal residence makes it likely that Nana was also one of the divine patrons of the Arsacid dynasty. West Iranian religious influence can be seen among the Saka tribes who borrowed some Zoroastrian terms from the Parthians (e.g. *den* 'religion', *arṭa* < Old Iranian *arθya*-, Avestan *ašya*- 'pious', *āḍu*- < Old Iranian *artavan*-, Avestan *ašavan*-). The phonetic form of these terms clearly supports a borrowing from Parthian and excludes a local 'Bactrian' origin.

The emergence of the names, Mioro, Mao, Aθṣo and Nana, instead of thecorresponding Greek names, Helios, Selene, Hephaistos, Nanaia, on the reverse of the coins struck by Kanishka was made possible by the creation of the Bactrian writing system based on the Greek alphabet during the reign of Vima Kadphises. The possibility of writing

[10] Harmatta, 1965, p. 171.

Bactrian enabled Kanishka to replace Greek with Bactrian legends on the coins, and to set up inscriptions written in Bactrian. As a consequence of this development, the Iranian gods removed the Greek-language disguise and appeared with their Iranian names. Even the names of the genuine Greek gods became slightly Bactrianizcd, the Greek word-ending being replaced by a Bactrian one.

While the development of a Bactrian script made it possible to replace Greek with Iranian names, it alone cannot explain the preference given by Kanishka and his successors to the Iranian divinities. Because the worship of the Iranian gods prevailed first in the territory of Bactria, the predominance of the Bactrian cults in the religious policy of Kanishka I also indicates the increased interest of the Kushan king in the western part of his empire – the home territory of Bactria. Behind this new orientation, we can note the strengthening of the Parthian kingdom during the second century A.D. when Parthia became a permanent threat to the Kushans.

None the less, the importance of India and the Indian religions, especially the worship of Śiva, remained unchanged. Kanishka has a reverse type representing Śiva with the name Oēṣo < Old Indian *Vṛṣa* > Prakrit *Veṣa* identifying the god by an inscription for the first time. If Mioro, Mao, Aθṣo and Nana were the ancient divine patrons of the Kushan dynasty, then Śiva had belonged to the same group of gods since the reign of Vima Kadphises. Consequently, reverse types of the coin issues of Kanishka represent primarily the dynastic pantheon of the Kushan king, to the worship of which the sanctuary of Surkh Kotal was dedicated.

Religious life under the 'triple' kingship

The successor of Kanishka seems to have been his son Vāsishka, who, according to the inscription of Kamra, was the great-grandson of Kujula Kadphises and ruled jointly together with his first-born son, Kanishka II. At the same time, on the basis of a fragmentary inscription from Mathura, [11] we can state that the grandfather of Huvishka was Vima Kadphises. If, therefore, Kanishka I was the son of Vima and grandson of Kujula Kadphises, Vasishka and Huvishka must have been brothers. According to the inscription of Kamra, both Vāsishka and Kanishka II were ruling in Year 30 of the era.

The Bactrian inscription of Ayrtam again attests the rule of Huvishka in Year 30, and on the basis of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* it could be argued that Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka all ruled at the same time. It seems, therefore, that Kanishka I was followed by his son Vāsishka who took his first–born son, Kanishka II, and his brother Huvishka as co-rulers.

[11] Cf. Lüders, 1961, pp. 138 et seq.

Taking into consideration that no coin issue of Vāsishka is known so far in the dynasty of the Great Kushans, apparently it was Kanishka II who minted coins and not his father Vāsishka. The coin issues bearing the name of Kanishka can possibly be divided between Kanishka I and Kanishka II. In fact, we can observe some striking changes in the Kushan pantheon, [12]represented on the coin reverses, which make it possible to attribute coins belonging to the third emission, from section A 2 on[13] to Kanishka II, who, on his coins, wears a hat-like crown with a broad, richly decorated brim.

On the reverses of these coin issues ascribed to Kanishka II, there appear a series of divinities, who did not play any part earlier in the Kushan coinage. They arc Pharro, Manaobago, *Ardoxṣo* Boddo, Ořlagno/Oṣlagno, Lroaspo, Mozdooano. Beside these deities, the ancient divine patrons of the Kushan dynasty such as Mioro, Mao, Nana and Oēṣo arc also represented. There must have been some reason for the emergence of new gods in the pantheon of the Kushan coins. Kanishka II, the son of Vāsishka, bearing the titles *mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra kaisara* (Great King, King of Kings, Son of God, Caesar) in the Ara inscription, is an enigmatic figure. His personality, however, appears in a new light if we recognize him as Chen-t'an Ki-ni-ch'a (*Candana Kanishka) of the Buddhist work *Śrīdharmapiṭakanidānasūtra*, according to which King Candana Kanishka won a great victory over the King of Pāṭaliputra and the Parthian king. Candana Kanishka is also mentioned by the name of Sandancs in the *Periplus* (Chapter 52) as a mighty ruler who conquered the most important harbours on the western shore of India south of Barygaza (Broach). It follows that the Buddhist legends woven around the figure of Kanishka belong not to Kanishka I but to his grandson, Kanishka II.

Kanishka II clearly recognized the importance of Buddhism in his kingdom. There were some important Buddhist centres in Bactria, at Termcz and Ayrtam, where missionary work of both the Mahāsāṇghika and the Sarvāstivāda schools was active. Kanishka II was, without doubt, a great protector of Buddhism and founded monasteries and built stupas according to the Buddhist tradition. From the viewpoint of the history of Buddhism, however, his most important action was to convene the Buddhist synod in Kashmir, a decisive turning-point in the life of the Buddhist schools. According to tradition, this synod of the Sarvāstivāda school compiled the *Jñānaprasthānam* and entrusted Aśvaghoṣa, the famous poet, with providing for the correct language form of the commentary written by Kātyāyana. Essentially, his charge was to rewrite the Buddhist works in Sanskrit. Earlier both the Mahāsāṅghika and the Sarvāstivāda schools equally used Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī to write Gāndhārī Prakrit. After the synod of Kashmir, however, as a consequence of the

[12] 'Zone of actuality'; see Göbl, 1983, pp. 85, 94.
[13] According to the system elaborated by Göbl; ibid., pp. 85–7.

literary activity of Aśvaghoṣa, the Sarvāstivāda preferred Sanskrit and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit written in Brāhmī script to Gāndhārī Prakrit written in Kharoṣṭhī script. So the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit became the literary language of Buddhism, and in this development the role of Kanishka II was decisive. It was not by chance that around his figure a cycle of Buddhist legends came into being.

None the less, he did not neglect other religions and cults. On the reverse types of coins beside Boddo (Buddha) we find other Iranian divinities both Zoroastrian and local. Among them Manao Bago probably represents the Bactrian name for Avestan Vohu Manah (Good Mind, Wisdom) which was in the possession of *xšaθra-* 'might, kingdom'; he bestows *xšaθra-* for the righteousness of man; and increased it to triumph over the Druj and enlarge the realm of Ahura Mazda. Thus the religious ideas belonging to the figure of Vohu Manah/ Manao Bago excellently fitted Kushan royal ideology in the context of Kanishka's victories and conquests. The function of Vohu Manah among the Amesha Spentas, and his relationship to Ahura Mazda, helped to introduce the principal god of Zoroastrianism himself into the ambience of the divine patrons of the Kushan king. *Mazdāh vana* represents 'the victorious [Ahura] Mazda' who triumphs over the Druj, like the Kushan king over his enemies. Of the local divinities Ardoxṣo, *Ořlagno* and Lroaspo were represented on the coin reverses of Kanishka II. Lroaspo was an ancient pre-Zoroastrian god ensuring the health of the horses of the Iranian equestrian nomads. He was also worshipped among the north-western Iranian equestrian nomadic tribes and his name was preserved in the form of the hydronym Dyrapses, reflecting the Alanian outcome **Druvāfsa-* of Old Iranian **Druvāspa-*. *Lruvāspa* occurring on the Kushan coins may represent the Bactriandevelopment of *Druvāspa*. Obviously, the Bactrians, who had an excellent cavalry and a famous race of horses, worshipped **Druvāspa-* > *Lruvāspa-* since their immigration to Bactria.

Ořlagno/Oṣlagno was an ancient Indo-Iranian divinity, a warrior god whose worship was broadly spread among both the western and the eastern Iranians. The name Ořlagno represents a local, Eastern Iranian development of Old Iranian **Vṛθraγna-*, namely, the consonant cluster *-rθ-* developed into *-ř-* or *-ṣ-*. Thus, even though this warrior god is well known in the *Avesta*, he was included in the Kushan pantheon not as a Zoroastrian but as a local deity, who was popular among the eastern Iranian warriors with the bird Vāragna on his helmet, armed with a spear and long sword.

Ardoxṣo was also a local divinity, as is clearly shown by the Manichaean Persian text M 2, which relates the encounter of the Apostle Mār Ammo with *bg'rd w'xš* (*Baγ Ard* spirit) who is named *wymndb'n ' y hwr's'n* 'Khorasan's frontier guard'. The local character of Ardoxṣo is confirmed by the place-name Bagarda, mentioned by Ptolemy (VI. 18.5) in the description of the Paropamisa-dae. Ardoxṣo can be identified with the Avestan goddess

Ardvi[14]who, according to the *Ardvīsūr Yašt*, bestows the highest royal power over all lands to her worshippers. Thus the figure of Ardoxṣo also fitted the Kushan royal ideology and enjoyed great popularity among the eastern Iranian population. From the iconographic view-point Ardoxṣo was identified with the Hellenistic Tyche, holding a cornucopia.

Lastly, Pharro, god of the royal splendour and glory, was probably of Parthianorigin. Old Persian *farnah-*, corresponding to Avestan *hvarənah-*'royal splendour', was borrowed from Median *farnah-* which may perhaps go back to a Scythian **farnah-* < * *hvarnah-*.[15] In any case **farnah-* > *farr* became a firm element of Arsacid royal ideology. The adoption of Pharro in the Kushan pantheon may have been connected with the idea seen in the *Kārnāmak-i Artaxšīr-i Pāpakān* according to which *farr* 'royal glory' always abandoned the defeated king and went over to the triumphant one. On the basis of this idea it was a natural step on the part of Kanishka II to introduce the cult of the royal glory into the religious life of the court, because it left the Parthian king Vologases, who was defeated by Kanishka and went over to the conqueror.

An important moment in the religious activity of Kanishka II was the restoration of the dynastic sanctuary at Surkh Kotal. The renewal or introduction of the cult of the goddess Oanindo (Victory) was obviously connected with his great victory over the Parthian king. He sent an officer, Nokonzoko by name, to the sanctuary in Year 31 (A.D. 165). By digging a well, Nokonzoko ensured the water supply of the stronghold and the sanctuary, and leading back the statues of the gods, renewed the cult of the dynastic divinities there.

The coinage of Huvishka also provides rich evidence for the religions and cults of the kingdom. The question must be raised, however: What chronological relationship can be established between the coinage of Kanishka II and that of Huvishka? On the basis of the epigraphic sources it is clear that the religious activity of the two kings, being co-rulers for at least a decade, continued in parallel. The religious activity of Huvishka was particularly intensive. According to the Bactrian inscription of Ayrtam (see Chapter 17), in Year 30 (A.D. 164), he sent his officer Ṣodila as treasurer to the sanctuary there and had a Pharro-Ardoxṣo image prepared and set up in the stronghold. Later, when the river changed its course and the sanctuary became waterless, he had the divinities and their cult transferred to another place. Then, by his officer Ṣodila, he had a well and a water-conduit dug, and having ensured the water supply, he resettled the cult of Pharro and Ardoxṣo into the sanctuary of Ayrtam. These events may be dated between Years 30 and 40 (i.e. A.D. 164 to 174).

[14] Harmatta, 1960, pp. 198 et seq.
[15] Lecoq, 1987, p. 678.

Similar activity by Huvishka can be seen at Mathura. The dynastic sanctuary of the Kushan kings built by Vima Kadphises was in a ruinous state when Huvishka sent a great general *(mahādaṇḍanāyaka*), who had the sanctuary restored and set up a statue of Huvishka in the *devakula*, ensuring regular hospitality for the Brahmans in the assembly hall belonging to the sanctuary. Even though the date of the inscription is not preserved or it was not dated, the restoration work can be dated to a later period, perhaps after Year 40, when Huvishka was already bearing the title *rājatirāja* (King of Kings).

The parallel rule of Kanishka II and Huvishka also raises the question of whether they minted coins in parallel. If this was the case, it would be easy to explain why Huvishka used the device of Kanishka II on his first issues. Being the brother of Vāsishka, Huvishka may have been substantially older than Kanishka II, and even though he apparently outlived him, it is improbable that he would have still been alive up to around Year 60. We probably have to reckon with two Huvishkas, father and son, and to divide the coinage between them. One possibility for the division lies in the remarkable change in the Kushan pantheon represented in Huvishka's reverse types.[16]

It is very likely that the minting of Huvishka I began in parallel with that of Kanishka II. At that time, the mints of Huvishka employed the device of Kanishka II and used as reverse types the same divine patrons of the dynasty, namely, Miiro, Pharro, Mao, Nanaṣao and Oēṣo with Manao Bago and Ardoxṣo who also occur. Mozdooano is missing from the divinities represented on the coin reverses. Instead of him, we find Serapis, the supreme deity of the Alexandrian pantheon whose name appears in the Bactrianized form of Sarapo. His emergence seems to indicate the orientation of Huvishka towards Roman Egypt, an important market for the wares imported from or through the Kushan Empire. Also omitted is the ancient Iranian war god Ořlagno, whose place and function are occupied by a group of Indian war gods, Skando (Old Indian Skanda), Komaro (Old Indian Kumāra), Maaseno (Old Indian Mahāscna), Bizago (Old Indian Viśākha), and even Ommo (Old Indian Umā), the consort of Śiva. Their use as reverse types of Huvishka I is clear evidence for the new trends in religious policy of the Kushan king, which was possibly influenced by enlisting Indian warriors into the Kushan army during the campaign against Pāṭaliputra.

Also interesting is the omission of Buddha from the reverse types of Huvishka. This is surprising because according to the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, Huvishka supported Buddhism, and the existence at Mathura of 'the monastery of the Great King, the King of Kings, the Son of God, Huvishka'[17]proves beyond doubt that the literary evidence corresponded with reality. The omission of Buddha from the coin types showing the divine helpers of the

16 Göbl, 1983, p. 87.
17 Lüders, 1961, p. 68.

Kushan king requires an explanation. The problem is closely connected with the function and meaning of the gods portrayed on the coins. They could indicate worship by the kings of the divinities represented, or protection by the gods that the king worshipped. Sometimes they may refer to pious gifts, or represent statues set up in a sanctuary, like the statue of Ardoxṣo in Huvishka's issue[18] which had been set up in a Buddhist sanctuary. This indicates the king's favour to Buddhism, and the tendency of Buddhism to absorb local cults. The omission of Buddha from his pantheon of reverse types did not in itself mean that Huvishka neglected Buddhism, because his royal favour is seen in support of the local cults absorbed by Buddhism.

New trends in the second phase of Huvishka

The second period of the coinage of Huvishka (perhaps Huvishka II) reveals someremarkable new trends. Beside the ancient divine patrons of the dynasty – Miiro, Mao, Nana, Oēṣo, Aθṣo 'the royal fire' and Pharro 'the royal splendour' – further Zoroastrian and local deities appeared. Among the Zoroastrian divinities, the emergence of Ooromozdo, the supreme god, is important. While *Mazdo oano* 'Mazda the victorious' represented the Bactrian form of the supreme god of Zoroastrianism in the effigy of a Kushan horseman, the phonetic form of the name Ohromozdo clearly points to western Zoroastrianism. The other Zoroastrian deities – Ṣaorēoro 'best royal power', Aṣaeixṣo 'best righteousness' (= Avestan *Xšaθrəm vairīm* and Avestan *Aša vahišta*), *Riṣto/Riṣti* 'uprightness' (= Avestan *Aršti/Arštāt)*[19] – represent important aspects of royal ideology. Among them Ṣaorēoro seems to be again of west Iranian origin, that is, he was adopted into the Kushan pantheon from western Zoroastrianism. On the contrary, Aṣaeixṣo and Riṣti are apparently local developments of Avestan Aša Vahišta and Aršti. Probably, the enigmatic legend *Auabod* also belongs to the ambience of Ohromozdo. In view of the fact that the name ends with a consonant while in Bactrian each word has a final vowel, the spelling ' *Auabod*' must represent an abridged form. Very likely the full form of the name can be restored as **Ahu budano* 'supreme lord of the creatures' (< Old Iranian **Ahu būtānām*), being a Bactrian name for Mithra, parallel to his Avestan designation *ahu ratuščа gaēθanam* 'supreme lord and judge of the living being'. Together with the legend *Ahubud* (*ano*) the effigy of Mithra appears on the coin, i.e. iconography and legend are in harmony with each other.

The other remarkable tendency is the emergence of the local divinities on coin reverses. Beside Lroaspo, already introduced by Kanishka II, Oaxṣo and lamṣo now appear. Oaxṣo

[18] Harmatta, 1986, p. 136.
[19] Grenet, 1987, p. 42.

was the well-known eastern Iranian god of waters and rivers, in particular the deity of the Oxus river. His sanctuary was discovered at Takht-i Sangin, on the northern bank of the Amu Darya. His popularity and importance are best illustrated by the inscription on a seal: *Oaxṣo i iogo bayo* 'Oaxṣo is the only god'. *Iamṣo* may again be identified with *Imrā* (< *Yama rājā*), the supreme god of the Kafiri (or Nuristani) tribes.[20] The form possibly reflects a popular dialect variant of the Bactrian **Iamo ṣao*. The emergence of the goddess Oanindo (Victory) on the coins of Huvishka II may have completed the group of divine patrons of the dynasty and can perhaps be brought into connection with the renewal of the Oanindo sanctuary at Surkh Kotal.

In religious policy, as reflected in his coinage, the efforts of Huvishka were obviously intended to enlarge the social basis of his rule by religious ideology, that supported all the local cults and Bactrian Zoroastrianism among the population of eastern Iran. The divine figures on Kushan coin reverses reflect the religious ideas and policy of the Kushan kings, but indirectly they also mirror the general trends of religious life – a very complex phenomenon under the Great Kushans, as we see at Mathura.

In the Kushan period there were numerous sanctuaries of different cults in the environs of Mathura. The Buddhists had about fifteen monasteries, three sanctuaries and numerous stupas; the Jains had three temples, and several stupas, there were three nāga shrines, the sanctuary of the yakṣa Mānibhadra and the royal dynastic sanctuary of the Great Kushans. From the inscriptions, we can follow the fortunes of particular sanctuaries and monasteries. Different Buddhist schools, the Sarvāstivādins, the Mahāsāṅghikas, the Samitiyas and the Mahopadeśakas, proclaimed their teaching at the same time. The golden age of Mathura seems to have been the time of Huvishka, from which the greatest number of dedicatory inscriptions are preserved. Religious life in Mathura was characterized by the co-existence of the great religions and their cults, mutually influencing and enriching each other.

Syncretism and absorption

In spite of the scanty evidence, fragmentary in many respects, we can draw somegeneral conclusions about religious life throughout the territory of the Kushans. It was highly developed and differentiated. The religious movements of India – Śivaism, Vishnuism, Jainism and Buddhism with their different schools – penetrated Central Asia, as did Indian merchants when Kushan rule facilitated long-distance international trade. In eastern Iran the Indian religions met the Greek divinities, Zoroastrianism and many local pre-Zoroastrian forms of worship, and encountered the ancient Iranian religious ideas of the northern

[20] Grenet, 1984, p. 260.

Iranian equestrian nomads. The Kushan kings selected for themselves from this immense variety those religious elements, ideas and forms of cults which fitted their ancient religious traditions and strengthened the religious ideology of their royal power. So the 'Kushan pantheon' appearing on the coins represents only a selection of the religious cults of their empire.

None the less, the Kushan kings were well aware of the current trends in religious life and followed them. The most important was syncretism. The great religions influenced one another and began slowly to absorb the local cults. In Bactria the syncretic cult of Śiva achieved great success; and on the coins of Bazodeo (Vāsudcva), the last Great Kushan king, Śiva was the sole divinity used, a figure that apparently combined Greek, Iranian and non-Śivaite Indian elements.

In eastern Bactria and Gandhāra the worship of Ardoxṣo became predominant,absorbing some features of the local yakṣī cults, of the worship of Lakṣmī and other minor Indian female divinities with elements of the Hellenistic Tyche. She became identified together with Pharro with the Indian couple Kubera and Hāritī, King and Queen of the yakṣas and yakṣīs. Consequently after the Sasanian conquest of Kushanshahr (the western part of the Kushan kingdom), the independent eastern Kushan kings made use of Ardoxṣo for the reverse of their coins. The syncretic character of the goddess is clearly shown by the legend *yakṣī* on the coins of Gadahara.[21] But while these two divinities, Śiva and Ardoxṣo, became predominant as divine patrons, their figures had absorbed many features of other divinities and had a syncretic character. Syncretism and absorption had finally prevailed in the 'Kushan pantheon'.

[21] Cunningham, 1971, No. 10.

15

KUSHAN ART*

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Contents

Kushan art in the north

Art was not uniform in style throughout the vast possessions of the Kushans. Several local centres and distinctive schools have been identified, and the Kushan Empire may be divided into four principal artistic regions: Bactria (Tocharistan in the basin of the Oxus (Amu Darya) and its tributaries); Arachosia and Nagarahāra (Ninhār, now Kabulistan, and the Jalalabad Province of Afghanistan); Gandhāra in Pakistan; and Mathura in India. Bactria is rooted in the Graeco-Bactrian traditions and Mathura in the Indian ones, while both geographically and in terms of history and culture, the second and third regions, each of which had its own independent origins, held the middle ground. Despite regional differences and variations, the fact remains that these areas were politically united under a single state, and this helped the pooling of ideas in various fields of artistic culture, which finally led to the shared stock of themes, images and attitudes that make it possible to view the arts of the Kushans as a single entity.

* See Map 7.

TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

The rapid growth of towns in this age went hand in hand with an increasingly vigorous urban culture. This process involved in the first instance the art of building cities. Some settlements, such as Balkh (Bactra), [1] Dilberjin, [2] Termez[3] and Dalverzin-tepe (Fig. 1)[4] in Bactria, sprang up around an original Graeco- Bactrian core which became the administrative and military centre or citadel. These were generally laid out in the form of a rectangle, which left room for subsequent development and was surrounded by fortress walls and a moat. Later there were improvements in fortification techniques.[5] Citadels were set apart, and city walls were made extremely strong and were flanked by several towers, mostly rectangular but some half-round. Passages and casemates were built into the walls and bowmen's chambers into the towers. Both were pierced by countless arrow-slits, real or blind, while along the parapet lay passage walkways for the defenders and mountings for balistas. The walls were 8–12 m thick at the base and 15–20 m high. Within the walls, the towns consisted of close-packed blocks of buildings in strict alignment with public squares, palaces and temples.

The sheer size of the buildings with which the architects had to deal forced them to devise new structural techniques. In Bactria, building materials were largely of clay such as sun-baked brick and *pakhsa* (a kind of adobe), and most structures were made of these materials. While beamed roofs were employed, pit-head vaults were designed for elongated structures, and, in square buildings, the densely patterned 'closed vault' was devised.

Exterior decoration was sober in the western part of the empire. The smooth stucco of the walls was relieved only by the slit-like window openings and the cornice edges of the flat roofs with their salient beam-ends, occasionally surmounted by a battlemented parapet. But inside, the main rooms were decorated with wall sculptures and paintings. The Bactrian Kushan architectural order figured prominently, in sets of either free-standing columns or wall pilasters. Columns were used in porticos or *aiwans* on the front façade, and in large halls to support the roof beams. They were of wood, but often rested on stone bases the shape of which followed either the Old Iranian tradition of a massive torus on a square

[1] Le Berre and Schlumberger, 1964, pp. 70 et seq.
[2] Dolgorukov, 1984, pp. 58 et seq.
[3] Shishkin, 1941, pp. 123 et seq., Plate 73.
[4] Pugachenkova and Rtveladzc, 1978, pp. 7 et seq., Plate 2.
[5] Le Berre and Schlumberger, 1964, Plates 15–18; Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, pp. 21 et seq.; Pugachenkova, 1979, pp. 47 et seq., 1984, pp. 93 et seq.; Dolgorukov, 1984 pp. 58 et seq.; Schlumberger et al., 1983, p. 185, Plates II, X, XXV; Rtveladze, 1982.

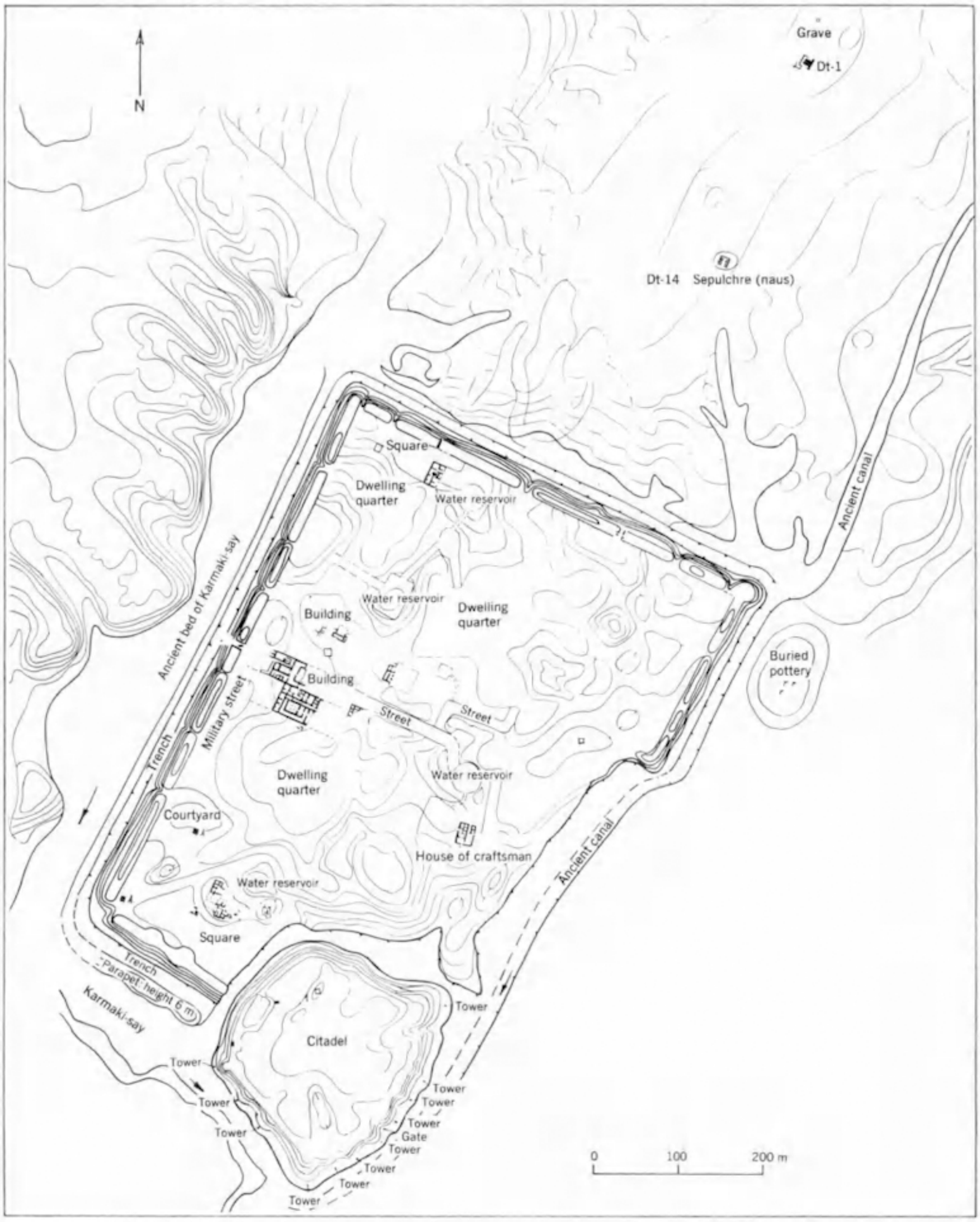


FIG. 1. Plan of the fortress of Dalverzin-tepe.

plinth, [6] or the Attic style inherited from the Greeks.[7] The pilasters were made of clay, stone or gypsum, and their capitals were variants of the Corinthian order, generally squat

[6] Pugachenkova, 1966, p. 132, Plates 29, 79, 1973, Plate 7.
[7] Pugachenkova, 1966, Plate 79, 1973, Plate 7, 1976, Plates 72–5; Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, p. 199, Plate 131; Schlumberger et al., 1983, Plates XX, XXII–XXIV, XXX–XXXIV, LVIII–LX.

in proportion and adorned with two or three rows of heavy acanthus leaves. There were, however, different types for which the term ‘composite’ might be more apt. In Buddhist buildings, the figure of a Bodhisattva or a gandharva might nestle among the acanthus leaves of the capitals, as at Surkh Kotal or Termez.[8]In Bactria, the capitals were highly individualized; among the acanthus leaves could be seen two lion griffins back-to-back, or a pair of zebu bulls with a fabulous bird-creature clawing at them in between. Such examples can be seen at Termez (Sham-kala) (Fig. 2) and Shahr-i Nau (Fig. 3).[9]

Like the public and religious buildings, the homes of the wealthy followed distinctive architectural designs. Some were patterned on the architectural norms of Bactria established in the previous period, while others revealed new features. The palaces and homes of the urban aristocracy were laid out either with a central hall and vestibule or with a courtyard – the whole being surrounded by a corridor. Accommodation and auxiliary premises, as at Khalchayan, Dalverzin-tepe (Fig. 4) and Dilberjin (Fig. 5), [10] were also provided for. The same concept – a hall with a corridor and possibly outbuildings around it – is typical of temples of the local cults in Kushan Bactria, whether Zoroastrian or dynastic, as at Takht-i Sangin (Fig. 6), [11] Dilberjin[12] or Surkh Kotal.[13]Externally, these residences, palaces and temples took their shape from the rectangular mass of the central hall or sanctuary. On the façades, nothing broke the smoothness of the walls, the principal one being identified by a colonnaded portico or *aiwan*.

TEMPLES AND BUDDHIST BUILDINGS

The temple buildings at Surkh Kotal (Fig. 7), dedicated to the dynastic cult of the Kushans, may be viewed as of representative character. They stand on a hill from the foot of which rise five flights of steps. High fortress walls flanked with rectangular towers protect the square courtyard and the galleries running round it, while in the centre, raised on a platform, looms the chief temple built in Kanishka’s times by his official, Nokonzoko. The exterior is surrounded by a colonnaded portico, while the four-columned shrine housing the altar is flanked on three sides by an ambulatory passage. In course of time two further structures of a religious nature were built in the traditional Bactrian manner – a square hall surrounded by a corridor divided by passageways – inside and outside the courtyard.

[8] Schlumberger et al., 1983, Plates LXVI–LXVIII; Pugachenkova, 1979 p. 55.
[9] Staviskiy, 1981, pp. 125 et seq., Plates 93–4; Dagens, 1960, pp. 38 et seq., 1968, pp. 36 et seq.
[10] Pugachenkova, 1966, Plate, 23, 1976, p. 91; Pugachenkova and Rtvcladze, 1978, Plates, 15, 26.
[11] Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981, Figs. 2–3.
[12] Kruglikova, 1982, Plate, 6.
[13] Schlumberger et al., 1983, Plates, IX, XXXVI–XXXVIII.



FIG. 2. Fragment of a capital from Termez.



FIG. 3. Stone capital from Shahr-i Nau.

As Buddhism spread from India to the western parts of the Kushan Empire, Buddhist buildings such as monasteries, stupas and shrines sprang up and their remains have been

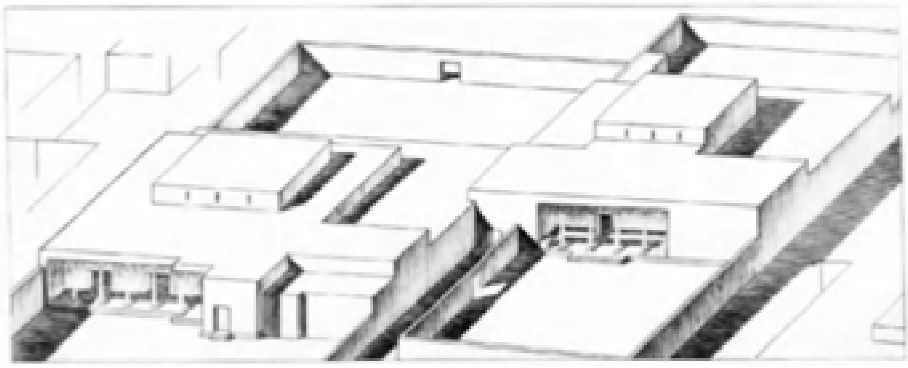


FIG. 4. Dwelling-houses in Dalverzin-tepe (reconstruction).

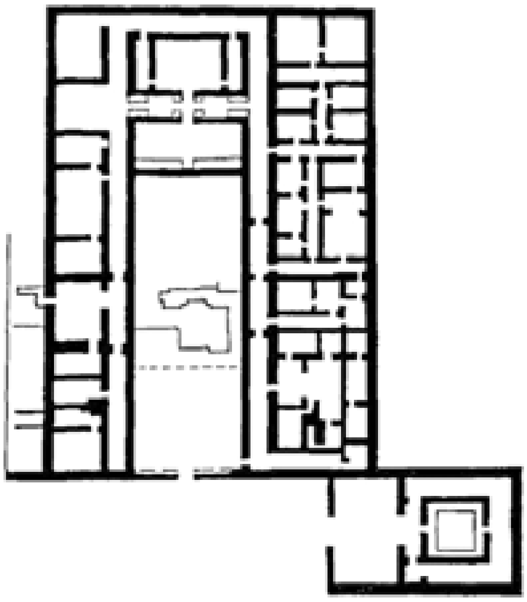


FIG. 5. Plan of a dwelling-house in Dilberjin.

found at Termez (Fig. 8), [14] Ayrtam, [15] Dilberjin[16] and Surkh Kotal.[17] Architecturally, buildings in these areas are somewhat different from Buddhist structures found in the Indian parts of the empire. They accepted a blending of different architectural settings used for decorative purposes. Wall sculptures and paintings were used as part and parcel of the decoration of *aiwans* main halls and shrines, while the facing of Buddhist stupas was invariably relieved by representational sculptures.

[14] Staviskiy, 1964–82a; Pugachenkova, 1967, pp. 257 et seq.; Al'baum, 1982, pp. 56 ct seq.
[15] Masson, 1976, pp. 81 et seq.
[16] Kruglikova and Pugachenkova, 1977, pp. 61 et seq.
[17] Schlumberger et al., 1983, pp. 75 et seq., Plates XLVII–XLVIII, LV.



FIG. 6. Colonnaded portico. Takht-i Sangin. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)



FIG. 7. The sanctuary at Surkh Kotal (reconstruction).



FIG. 8. Buddhist stupa, 'Bastion of Zurmal', at Termez.

Murals were constructed in a kind of glue-based tempera laid on a thick rendering of clay with vegetable additives (which was partly responsible for crumbling when the additives decayed) either directly or on a white ground. The colour range was small with a predominance of red, black and white; yellow, blue and green were rarely used. The additional hue of white, however, enabled a whole spectrum of shades to be achieved.

Only fragments of murals have survived but these command attention in respect of the variety of themes and motifs. Paintings of people of different ethnic groups are noticed, along with figures with real animals like the horse, or imaginary ones like the griffin. So are scenes of court life and subjects taken from the religious beliefs and current myths of the time in Bactria. In the Buddhist monasteries of Kara-tepe and Fayaz-tepe at Termez, for example, portraits of the Buddha, a monk and benefactors in typical Kushan costume have been discovered., [18] In Dilberjin, after the Graeco-Bactrian temple of the Dioscuri had been rededicated to Śiva, a scene was added showing Śiva, Parvatī and the bull Nandi (Fig. 9).[19] The temple of the Bactrian goddess in Dalverzin-tepe contained a painting of her seated on a throne, and a representation of an unknown ritual in which a priest and priestesses offer small children for her blessing (Fig. 10).[20] Mural decoration also incorporated ornamental motifs, as the classical palmettos in the temple of the Bactrian goddess at Dalverzin-tepe, reflecting the impact of the Greek tradition. Others clearly represent patterned fabrics:

[18] Staviskiy, 1972, Tables IV and V; Al'baum, 1975.
[19] Kruglikova, 1974, p. 44, Plate 30.
[20] Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, pp. 79 et seq., Plates 50–5; Pugachenkova, 1979, Plates 194, 196, 199, 200.



FIG. 9. Śiva, Parvatī and the guard. Painting in the sanctuary of Dilberjin.



FIG. 10. Ritual scene. Fragment of a painting from Dalverzin-tepe. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

the Khalchayan palace had unconstrained shoots, foliage, clusters of grapes, violets and rounded fruits painted white against a dark red background. Others again consist of purely ornamental latticework interwoven with rings, as in Kara-tepe at Termez.

All these fragments testify to great professional skill on the part of the artists, andprobably point to the existence of special guilds of artists in large cities. At the same time, they record traces both of Greek influence and of the gradual assimilation of that influence with the emerging new style. Apart from these paintings, it is the sculpture providing decoration for buildings that commands great admiration. Among the artistic achievements of antiquity, the Central Asian sculptures of the Kushan period now rank among the finest. In Bactria, sculptures were usually of clay, finished in paint or plaster, though some were of white marble-like limestone.

MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE

The range of subjects and scenes in Bactrian monumental sculpture was unusually wide and varied, both secular and religious, dynastic and public. Of the dynastic groups, particularly illuminating are the sculptures at Khalchayan dating from the beginning of the Christian era, [21] Dalverzin-tepe from the first century A.D.[22]and Surkh Kotal (second century A.D.).[23]In the palace at Khal chayan, complete scenes were carved around the walls of the main hall and the *aiwan*. In the hall, the centre-piece was a scene of imperial splendour – a Kushan monarch of the lineage of Heraus, seated on a throne with his lady. Above them are Nike and Heracles, and on both sides are men and women of the imperial household. To the right is another dynastic scene – the head of the family shown seated while others stand around in formal attitudes. To the left is a battle scene with mounted heroes in armour and helmets, and lightly armed bowmen shooting as they advance (Figs. 11, 12, 13, 14).

All the characters are portrayed in a completely individual manner and are clearly taken from life. Their different ethnic origins are accentuated, Bactrian and Parthian princes appear, and the majority of the figures are supposed to be the Kushan clan of Heraus, the monarch well known from his image on coins. The head compressed at the front and back, the eyes stretching lynx-like to the temples, the straight nose, the finely drawn moustache and sideboards, the straight hair caught up in a fillet or circlet – all these are tribal characteristics of the whole of Heraus' lineage (Fig. 15).

This sculpture was executed in the expressively realistic style that the Greeks brought to Bactria, though the images themselves are emphatically local. A pronounced interest in

[21] Pugachenkova, 1971, pp. 153 et seq.
[22] Pugachenkova, 1979, pp. 131 et seq., Figs. 123–4.
[23] Schlumberger et al., 1983, Plates LVIII–LXXI.



FIG. 11. Hall of the palace in Khalchayan (reconstruction).

human individuality is revealed in the portrayal not only of the subject's physical features and age, but also of his emotions. The same style may be seen in the sculpted head of the great goddess of Bactria in the Dalverzin-tepe temple, [24] which dates from the same period, and the image of a crowned local ruler from the temple at Dilberjin.[25]

The main scenes at Khalchayan are topped by a sculpted frieze showing amorinis, naked or in flowing tunics, holding garlands with the busts of actors, musicians, satyrs andmummers inset.[26]The Hellenistic inspiration for this is clearly evident, but the characters are all Asian, or more specifically Bactrian Kushan, in appearance. The identical motif of amorinis holding garlands is carved on a second-century slab from Surkh Kotal.[27]

The cult of Heracles, identified in Bactria with a local divinity or demigod, continued until the very end of the Kushan period. A small first-century statuette of this demigod was found in Takht-i Sangin[28] while his painted clay statue of the second century was found in the garrison built along the gateway bastion at Dilberjin.[29]

A considerable impact on the development of sculpture throughout the Kushan region was made by Buddhism, the basic images, subjects and topics of which were developed in Gandhāra and spread to the north-west of the empire. Here they were assimilated with earlier indigenous traditions. A case in point is a second-century sculptured frieze from

[24] Pugachenkova and Rtveladze, 1978, Plate 56; Pugachenkova, 1979, Plates 175–6.
[25] Kruglikova, 1974, Table 1.
[26] Pugachenkova, 1971, pp. 22 et seq., 1979, Figs. 135–6.
[27] Schlumberger et al., 1983, Plate LV.
[28] Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981, Fig. 12.
[29] Pugachenkova, 1977, pp. 77 et seq.



FIG. 12. Statue of a queen. Khalchayan. Painted clay.

Ayrtam in which female figures half-emerge from acanthus leaves.[30] These are the celestial musicians or gandharvas, and girls bearing offerings of flowers, garlands or vessels. But in their ethnic appearance, head-dresses and ornaments they differ from those typical of India, and clearly portray local characteristics.

In portraying the image of the Buddha (Fig. 16), the Bactrian sculptors followed the established canons of the beginning of the Christian era, but for the secondary figures in the Buddhist pantheon – devatās (Fig. 17 and 18), genies or gandharvas – they returned to earlier Graeco-Bactrian traditions. These can be seen in figures such as the heads of devatās from the Buddhist shrine at Dalverzin-tepe, whose softly modelled features and fleeting smiles are reminiscent of the school of Praxiteles.[31]

[30] Trever, 1940, pp. 149 et seq., Tables 45–9.
[31] Pugachenkova, 1979, p. 167, Tables 204–5.



FIG. 13. Statue of a Kushan Yüeh-chih prince. Khalchayan. Painted clay.



FIG. 14. Statue of a Kushan Yüeh-chih prince. Khalchayan. Painted clay.



FIG. 15. Head of a warrior. Khalchayan. Painted clay. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

The Bactrians also differed in their portrayal of lay devotees of Buddhism. The Kushan prince in his pointed head-dress, great ladies with costly hairbands and a magnate from the same Dalverzin shrine are notable for reflecting their personal features. As distinct, however, from Khalchayan, sculptures from Dalverzin (Figs. 19 and 20) suggest a smoother moulding of the features without any sign of age, and controlled, almost non-existent emotions. They correspond not only to the ethical standards and want of sensuality prescribed by Buddhism, but also to the new tendencies in sculpture in which the emphasis in portraiture shifts from the individual to the formal. Even more generalized and formal is the dynastic sculpture of Surkh Kotal, which represents the chief emperors of the Great Kushan dynasty (Fig. 21), including the great emperor Kanishka noted for the shape of hishead-dress.

THE MINOR ARTS

The hallmark of the various 'minor arts' in Kushan Bactria is seen from the artefacts made by professional craftsmen. Moulded or hand-made terracotta statuettes became widespread, the former most commonly figures of the great goddesses worshipped locally and bound up with ancient folk cults of the mother goddess, the patron of fertility, childbirth



FIG. 16. Head of the Buddha from Fayaz-tepe. Termez. Gypsum on clay. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

and prosperity (Figs. 22 and 23). They differed from region to region on the basis of features, head-dress and clothing, apparently in response to local variations in population.[32]

[32] Gardin, 1957, Plate X; Pugachenkova, 1979, Plates 178, 179, 181–9; Kruglikova, 1974, Plates 26, 56, 68; Kruglikova and Pugachenkova, 1977, Plates 32, 103; Meshkeris, 1969, Plates 23–5.



FIG. 17. Head of a devatā. Dalverzin-tepe. Gypsum on clay. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

Less frequent are moulded male statuettes, usually in Kushan costume, either as the goddesses' male companion or as a demigod.[33] But crudely fashioned figurines of mounted horsemen were found far and wide, and are thought to relate to the cult of the ancestor-god brought to the cities by the steppe tribes.[34] The import of ivory from India gave rise to the art of representational carving (Fig. 24). On a plaque from Takht-i Sangin dating from the beginning of the Christian era, for example, there is a dynamic hunting scene in which two horsemen are represented in a manner very reminiscent of the sculptured bowmen of Khalchayan.[35]

The crafted metal jewellery of Kushan Bactria was shaped by the tastes of the upper classes. Its outstanding objects were found in the tombs at Tillya-tepe in northern Afghanistan, [36] and include thousands of gold artefacts (Figs. 25 and 26), sometimes

[33] Gardin, 1957, Plate X; Pugachenkova, 1973, Plate 31.
[34] Pugachenkova, 1965, pp. 248 et seq.
[35] Litvinsky and Pichikyan, 1981, Figs. 15–16.
[36] Sarianidi, 1985.



FIG. 18. Head of a devatā. Dalverzin-tepe. Gypsum on clay.

encrusted with precious stones – massive necklaces, bracelets, sheaths, complex composite crowns, finely figured platelets for sewing on clothing or shrouds. Some of these are genuine masterpieces of the jeweller's craft. Many incorporate representational motifs which place them in several stylistic groups.

Some of these motifs can be traced to ancient Oriental traditions in art, such as the open bracelets finished at the ends with the horned heads of lion-griffins. A statuette of a mountain goat in the round, a suite of rearing, horned griffins with snarling dog-like heads or a frontally portrayed scene in which a royal hero grapples with horned, winged and fish-tailed dragons on either side are equally interesting. All these images evoke the art of Achaemenid Iran, though a number of elements in them do appear alien to that tradition.

Some objects bear traces of Hellenistic influence. Among direct imitations from Greek art is the image of Aphrodite. Her Greek features are commonly recast in the Asian mould, as in the case of naked cupids riding dolphins and the figurines of a semi-nude winged goddess reclining on a throne (accompanied in one case by a soaring Eros) or the war-god Ares with a Greek cuirass and a Partho-Bactrian helmet.

Of particular interest is the 'animal style', as it was known. There are small plates depicting rearing dragons or a beast of prey pulling down a quadruped, and phalerae embossed with beasts of prey or fabulous zoomorphic creatures rolled into a ball as if biting their own tails. It should be noted that similar gold phalerae with turquoise insets, portraying a battle between three panthers, have been found in Takht-i Sangin (Fig. 27).

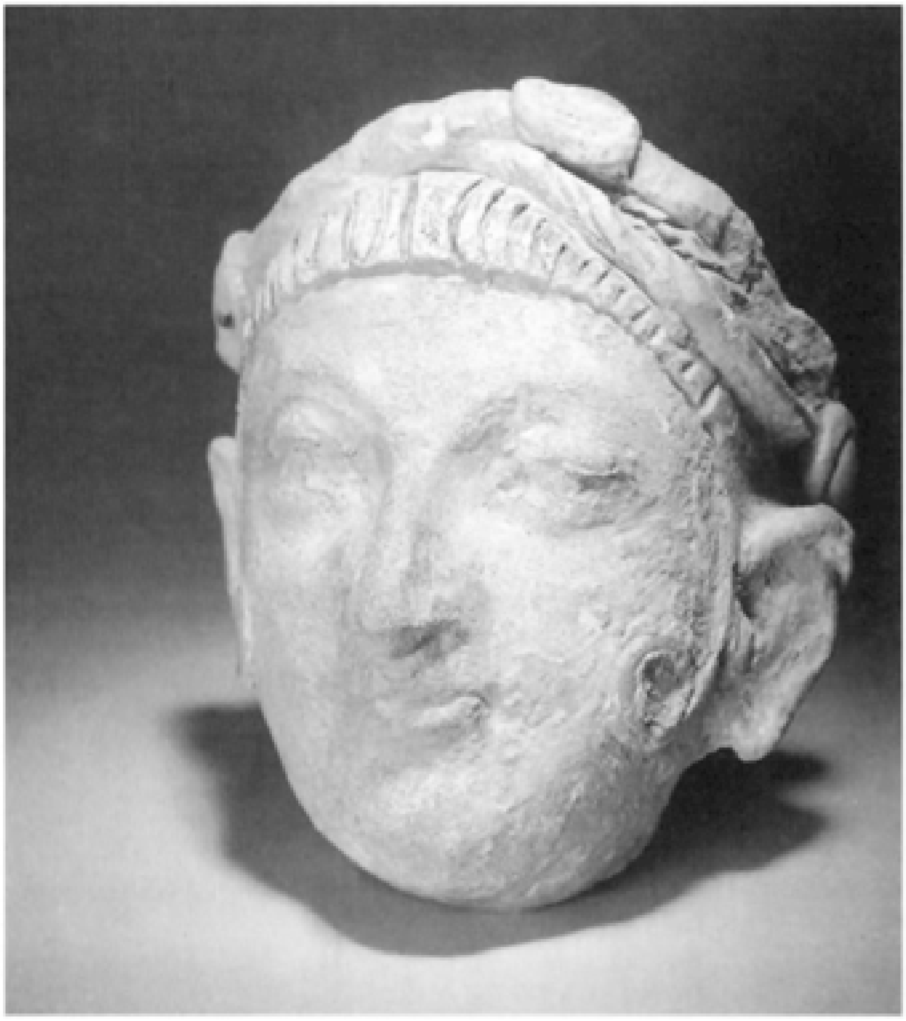


FIG. 19. Head of a noble lady. Dalverzin-tepe. Painted gypsum on clay. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

But the Tillya-tepe collection is more than a mere synthesis of ancient Oriental, Hellenized and steppe art: it contains new elements. The faces of the goddesses and cupids, the heroes and other characters, the clothing, weapons and other details are of an intensely local kind. By their technique (known as the encrustation style) and composition devices most of this collection belongs to what is called the Sarmatian culture, which flourished over a large part of Eurasia from the first century B.C. to the first century A.D.

Archaeologists are inclined to connect the Tillya-tepe burials with the period of the Early Kushans. However, stylistic parallels are so close between many of these items and the objects of Parthian Nisa and the Saka-Parthian strata of Taxila that there is far more reason to detect a link with these peoples' advance into western Bactria, Sistan and then parts of ancient north-western India, yielding to the Kushans only in the first century A.D.



FIG. 20. Statue of a magnate. Dalverzin-tepe. Painted gypsum on clay.

A hoard of first-century objects of gold from Dalverzin-tepe, hidden beneath thedoorstep of a wealthy home, illustrates the next phase in the development of Central Asian ornamental metalware.[37] Together with gold discs and bars, many marked with their weight in Kharoṣṭhī characters, the hoard provided a number of crafted ornaments, supposed to have been manufactured by local Bactrian jewellers. These include bracelets, earrings and pectorals. Items of Indian craftsmanship include a necklace that was probably owned by a member of the upper Indian aristocracy while a phalera depicting a fabulous shaggy beast rolled into a ball seems to have been executed in the traditions of Scytho-Sarmatian animal style.

Viewed as a whole, Bactrian art of the Kushan period is a complex, composite and evolving art. The combination of elements that date back to the past, Hellenistic motifs, steppe 'animal style' and Indo-Buddhist influences are all grafted on to native Bactrian traditions and transformed by the creativity of the artist, giving rise to a new and different phase in the development of Bactrian Kushan artistic culture.

[37] Pugachenkova, 1978.



FIG. 21. Statue of a ruler (Kanishka?). Surkh Kotal. Painted gypsum



FIG. 22. Statuette of a Bactrian goddess. Terracotta from Dalverzin-tepe.



FIG. 23. Statuette of a Bactrian goddess. Terracotta from Dalverzin-tepe.



FIG. 24. Comb with engraved figures. Ivory from Dalverzin-tepe.

Kushan art in Bactria

SURKH KOTAL

Surkh Kotal, about 14 km north of Pul-i Khumri and 232 km north of Kabul, is noted for dynastic temples that were set up during the reign of the Great Kushan king



FIG. 25. Sitting warrior. Tillya-tepe. (Courtesy of V. Sarianidi.)

Kanishka and his successors in the second century A.D. In the main temple a square fire altar was found, suggesting the existence of belief in Zoroastrianism. Schlumberger suggested that the sculptural decoration of the temples showed a blending of different artistic



FIG. 26. Goddess between two dragons. Tillya-tepe. (Courtesy of V. Sarianidi.)



FIG. 27. Gold phalera. Takht-i Sangin. (Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.)

trends, including steeped merlons of Oriental tradition. Noticing the stone frieze, the series of unbaked and painted clay figures, and the damaged stone reliefs, he suggested that the statues found there should be compared with the enthroned figures at Nimrud Dag of the mid-first century B.C. representing rulers (or gods) and the Kushan images of Mathura.[38]

The statues of a Kushan noble and the Kanishka statue exhibit the same symmetry, dress and jewellery. Most of the sculpture from Surkh Kotal provides evidence for indigenous Bactrian art and its relation with the art of Gandhāra.

TILLYA-TEPE

Tillya-tepe (Golden Hill), 5 km north of Sheberghan, was excavated by the Afghan-Soviet Archaeological Mission in 1978/79 and yielded 20, 000 gold artefacts. It was the site of a temple in the second millennium B.C. During the rule of the Achaemenids a magnificent palace was built but it was later damaged by fire, and completely destroyed by the Greek army in the fourth century B.C. Later, in the first century A.D., the site was used as a graveyard for one or two generations in the time of the Kushans. The numerous objects of the site's earlier period include Greek antiquities of Graeco-Bactrian date. Those from the later period represent the production of Bactrian artists and can be compared with the Begram hoard providing evidence of contacts with India, Rome, China and Parthia.[39] The style of

[38] Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 165–7.
[39] Sarianidi, 1985.

this group was influenced by local trends, and by Graeco-Bactrian, Roman and Parthian art, a combination of styles that sheds light on some unsolved problems of the Kushan art of later centuries.

DILBERJIN KAZAN

The temple of Dilberjin Kazan, situated 4 km north-west of Balkh, was excavated by the Afghan-Soviet Archaeological Mission over several seasons, and produced painted clay statues and wall paintings, which reveal traces of Bactrian style influenced by Transoxania. The wall paintings are most important for the study of art in northernAfghanistan during the Kushan period. They can be compared to the paintings from Balalîk-tepe in southern Uzbekistan, dated by ex-Soviet archaeologists to the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth century A.D. The dating proposed for these paintings of Dilberjin Kazan is the first half of the fifth century A.D. The paintings are not the earliest ones found at Dilberjin Kazan, which belong to the Graeco-Bactrian period, according to Kruglikova. The façade of the temple is decorated with a painting representing the Dioscuri with their horses, while another painting on a later wall of the same temple depicts Śiva and Parvatī seated on the bull Nandi, surrounded by devotees.

Kushan art in Nagarahāra and Arachosia

BEGRAM

Begram, about 64 km north-east of Kabul, has been identified with Kāpiśa, the summer capital of the famous Kushan king Kanishka. The Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA) carried out several limited excavations there between 1936 and 1946 but only a small part of the town area has been dug. The ruins of Begram represent three stages in the history of this famous city.[40] The original foundations were laid out on a plan not markedly different from Hellenistic cities such as Dura-Europos. This was the capital of the last of the Graeco-Bactrian kings and the first rulers of the Kushan dynasty. The second Begram, modified only by the construction of new palaces and fortifications, was the northern capital of Kanishka and his successors. It is clear that the town was violently destroyed by fire, probably at the time of the disastrous invasion of the Sasanians. The last town rose on the ruins and was probably abandoned with the coming of the Hephthalites in the fifth century A.D.[41]

[40] MacDowall and Taddei, 1978, p. 257.
[41] Rowland, 1976, pp. 24–5.



FIG. 28. Plaster emblem of a sleeping maenad. First century A.D. Begram (diameter 17.5 cm).

The fame of Begram rests on the discovery of two rooms (probably part of the 'palace'), which were filled with objects of enormous value – Chinese lacquer boxes, Graeco-Roman statuettes in bronze, a collection of fine Roman glass, Graeco-Roman vessels of porphyry and alabaster and an extraordinary group of plaster casts (Fig. 28) apparently taken from classical metalwork. In addition, the treasure rooms yielded a large number of superb Indian ivory carvings (Figs. 29,30,31), which had originally served as parts of various articles of furniture. Many of these objects represent types and techniques otherwise unknown to classical Graeco-Roman and Indian art. The discoveries at Begram show that under the Kushans there were close relations at artistic and cultural levels between Bactria, Gandhāra and Rome. The find of such a treasure of classical luxury goods at Kāpiśa is thus an interesting phenomenon, which seems to indicate a prevalent taste for Graeco-Roman art.[42]

HADDA

Hadda was the magnificent Buddhist centre of Gandhāra about 8 km south of Jalalabad. Like a golden mirage of towers, the thousand stupas of Nagarahāra and Hadda drew the Chinese pilgrims Fa-hsien and Hsüan-tsang to this pilgrimage centre in the fifth and seventh centuries A.D. respectively. As a result of archaeological excavations by DAFA and the Afghan Archaeological Mission, several *saṅghārāmas* stupas and other constructions

42 Ibid., p. 28.

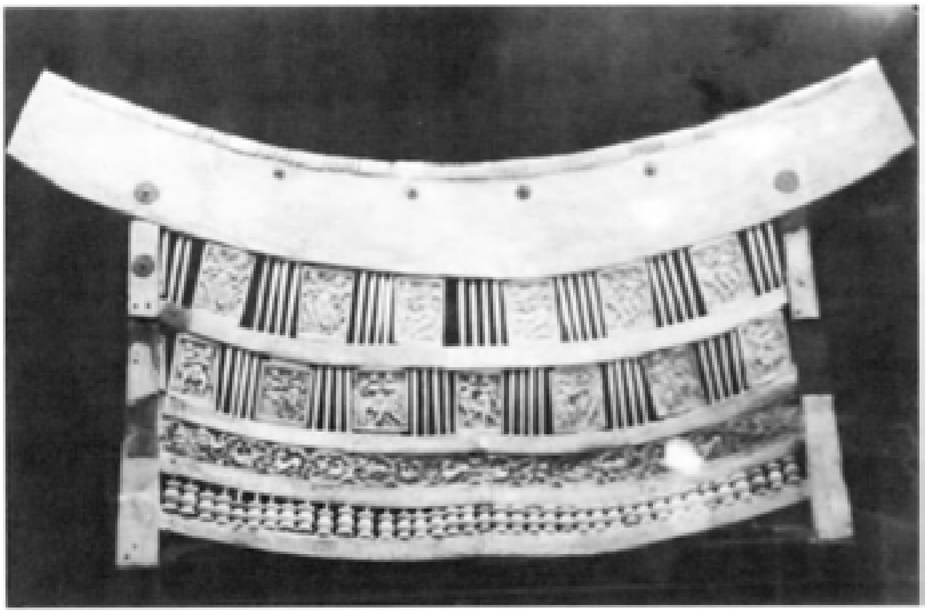


FIG. 29. Ivory throne back. Second century A.D. Begram (height 57 cm).



FIG. 30. Ivory panel. Second century A.D. Begram (height 41 cm).

such as porches decorated with statues and paintings have been discovered. The numerous objects found include statues of the Buddha, of Buddhist monks, donors, isVajrāpaṇis, coins and pottery. The evidence from the *saṅghārāmas* and stupas of Hadda and the surrounding areas shows the artistic importance of the region under the Kushans and later



FIG. 31. Ivory statuette of a yakṣī. First century A.D. Begram (height 40 cm).

rulers. The style of art is associated with the Gandhāra school and exhibits a blending of Bactrian, Graeco-Roman and Indian concepts. There are sculptures in schist and limestone, but mostly in clay, stucco or lime plaster. According to Marshall, the stucco sculpture represents a late Indo-Bactrian renaissance, while Bachhofer considers it as a later development of the Gandhāra style.[43]

The problem of the chronology of the stucco sculptures from Hadda needs furthere-lucidation. While it is certain that the majority belongs to the Kushan period, it is clear that some of the material excavated should be assigned to a date before the arrival of the Kushans. The outstanding feature is their extraordinary skill in portraying human character and emotions, in a way rarely seen in other parts of the Kushan Empire.

Some pieces from Hadda show the influence of local trends in style and subject matter. Statues of local people, yakṣīs, donors with Kushan dress suggest the mixing of the local and foreign elements in Gandhāra art, which, according to Schlumberger, had its base here. Finds of artistic material from Begram, Ay Khanum, Surkh Kotal, Dilberjin Kazan and Tillya-tepe support this and the excavations of the Afghan Archaeological Mission at Tepe Shotor in Hadda throw new light on the theory advanced by Schlumberger.

[43] Roland, 1976 p. 28.

PAITAVA AND SHOTORAK

The *saṅghārāmas* at Paitava and Shotorak, near Begram, excavated by DAFA, weredecorated with sculptures that were mostly carvings in the familiar blue-grey schist of Gandhāra. The image of the Buddha and other Buddhist divinities and representations from the *Jātakas* figure here. Some of these images have a hieratic rigidity suggestive of the sculpture of Hatra and Palmyra, and this resemblance extends to the treatment of the drapery as well. Other carvings from these sites, like the monumental reliefs of the Buddha and Kaśyapa, suggest the deeply carved reliefs of the Gandhāra style of the second and third centuries A.D. According to Rowland, 'these fragments of stone sculpture from the region of Begram are of great importance, illustrating the final phase of the Gandhāra style that was destined to exercise far greater influence on Buddhist sculptures in Central Asia'.

The influence of a local element is traceable in Paitava carvings. The figure of a standing donor carrying offerings under the śāla tree is a typical example. He wears the characteristic Kushan mantle, baggy trousers and felt boots similar to the dress of the famous statues of King Kanishka from Surkh Kotal and Mathura. Similar types of donors are portrayed at Hadda.

TEPE SARDAR

The early layer of Tepe Sardar, south of Ghazni near the Kabul–Kandahar highway, excavated by the Italian Mission in 1959, yielded interesting material mostly related to the time of the Later Kushans. The excavated layers are simply a thick filling following the destruction of a rich decorative complex made of unbaked-clay sculptures. These layers have similarities with those of the Kāpiśa, Fondukistan, Tepe Maranjan and Jalalabad areas. The clay sculpture of the earlier phase of Tepe Sardar, in its manifold aspects, belongs to the tradition of Bactrian Hellenism, and shows affinities with the clay images from Surkh Kotal and Tepe Maranjan.[44]

TEPE MARANJAN (KABUL)

The monastery of Tepe Maranjan, on the eastern outskirts of Kabul, may be dated to the late fourth century A.D. Its sculptures are executed in clay with a thin veneer of lime plaster, and appear to be a later development of Hadda style, anticipating the style of Cave G at Bamiyan and of Fondukistan, in a combination of painting and sculpture. As in other areas of Gandhāran art, jewellery distinguishes a Bodhisattva from the Buddha.[45] Similar

[44] MacDowall and Taddei, 1978, pp. 278–9.
[45] Snellgrove, 1978, p. 183.

material was found at Tepe Khazana, north-west of Kabul town, reflecting the later Gandhāra style of the fifth or sixth century A.D.

Kushan art of Gandhāra

Although the beginning of Kushan art in Bactria can now be traced, as is shown by the excavations at Khalchayan[46] and Ay Khanum, [47] very little work has been done so far to establish its origin in Gandhāra proper. This is because the Kushan art of Gandhāra has so far been studied from a limited perspective. Kushan material has been excavated from only three major cities within the cultural periphery of Gandhāra – at Begram (or Kāpiśa), [48] Puṣkalāvatī (or Peucelaotis)[49] and Taxila[50] – and from the two sites outside the Indus region, that is, Mathura[51] and Surkh Kotal.[52] Takht-i Bahi, Jamal Garhi, Sahr-i Bahlol, Shah-jiki-Dheri (Peshawar), Tharelli, Mekha Sanda, Nathu, Sanghao, Hadda, Manikyala, Rani Ghat, etc. have yielded material for study. Besides these, at least twenty Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions and numerous gold and copper coins have been found. But although we know about many Buddhist sculptures[53] of the Kushan period from the region, Gandhāra art has so far been studied only for the sake of its sculptural wealth and Buddhist religion or to detect Western influence, never with a view to studying the civilization of which the sculptures were a part.[54]

GANDHARAN ART AND BUDDHISM

The Kushan sculptures from Gandhāra are predominantly Buddhist. Although the Buddha himself never visited Gandhāra, with the passage of time the area became a veritable holy land for his followers. Several spots were identified as having an alleged association with the Buddha in his pre-natal existence, and over these, stupas and monasteries were built. In early Buddhism, introduced here by Aśoka (third century B.C.), the Buddha was never represented in human form. But constant exposure of the Gandhāra Buddhists to the art and pantheistic religion of the Western world created a schism between the purist and the more forward-looking Buddhists. Whether out of conviction or as an act of liberal

[46] Pugachenkova, 1971.
[47] Bernard, 1967; Bernard et al., 1973.
[48] Ghirshman, 1946.
[49] Dani, 1965/66.
[50] Marshall, 1951.
[51] Vogel, 1910; Rosenfield, 1967 p. 41.
[52] Schlumberger, 1955, 1961, pp. 77–95.
[53] Ingholt, 1957; Marshall, 1960, pp. 63–108.
[54] Dani, 1969, p. 2.

patronage, Kanishka is said to have convened the fourth Buddhist Council at Kuvana near Jullundur (or at Kandalavana in Kashmir), which finally put an end to the dissensions that had distracted the Buddhist Church for nearly a century. [55]As a result, Mahayanism – a liberal and progressive school of Buddhism – flourished in Gandhāra and laid emphasis, among other things, on the transformation of the Buddha into a great mythological, almost eternal, god, and on the deification of future Buddhas as holding providences.[56] In the visual arts, the Buddha was permitted for the first time to be represented in human form. It is a moot point where and when the first image of the Buddha was made – in Gandhāra or at Mathura.[57] Probably, it developed simultaneously at both places, one developing directly out of indigenous Indian art and the other (Gandhāra) borrowing its type from the West. Formerly it was generally held that the earliest Buddha images belonged to the time of Kanishka, but long ago Marshall wrote of an Early Gandhāra style developing during the first century A.D. New excavations by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Swat and a reassessment of the Taxila evidence have led several scholars to push back the date even to the first century B.C.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST ART

The sudden liberalization of Buddhism was a signal for the development of Buddhist art in Gandhāra and it soon reached its peak. However, it is wrong to say that the profusion and popularity of Gandhāra art owes its existence to the state-owned Church or that its distinctive appearance is indebted to the mechanical product of higher craftsmanship from the West.[58] As a matter of fact, Gandhāra art simply expresses the socio-religious fervour of its people. An indigenous socio-economic stratum of cultivated taste – the merchants, bankers, caravaners and minor officials – and not the Kushan nobility may have provided the main impetus for its development.[59] The Kushans themselves never extended any official patronage to it. They were eclectic in religion, fire-worshippers in Bactria, Buddhists in Gandhāra and Hindus in Mathura.[60]

SCULPTURE

The Kushan art of Gandhāra is mainly known from the wealth of sculpture recovered from the numerous Buddhist stupas and monasteries throughout; Gandhāra. Standing and seated

55 Puri, 1965, p. 143; Walters, 1904/05, pp. 273–6.
56 Puri, 1965, p. 145.
57 Coomaraswamy, 1926, pp. 165 et scq.; Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 1949, pp. 170–1.
58 Rowland, 1970, pp. 121–5.
59 Rosenfield, 1967, p. 73.
60 Sclumberger, 1961, pp. 77–95.

statues of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva Maitreya, and stone slabs depicting in low relief the legend of the Buddha's birth stories, or *Jātakas* abound. Most of these statues and panels were carved out of a locally available grey or blue slate stone called schist, but stucco was also used for making statues and reliefs (Fig. 32). Clay and terracotta were used relatively sparingly. The change of medium (from schist to stucco) gave more freedom, diversity and cheapness. Modelling in malleable material made it easier to prepare casts from moulds and made it more convenient and cheaper to increase production. Whether or not the use of stone and stucco for sculpturing finally split up in two different schools – the latter springing phoenix-like from the ashes of the former but still separated from the other by a hiatus of a century and a half[61] – does not concern us here.

FIGURE OF THE BUDDHA

The Gandhāra Buddha is an idealized figure having a delightful face unaffected by age or affliction. Standing barefoot or seated cross-legged he is always shown wearing an undergarment and a monk's robe. Among the signs of a *mahāpuruṣalakṣana* (great man), the *uṣṇīṣaūrṇā* and *dharmacakra* are usually visible. His Apollo Belvedere type of face, though just one among the numerous types known, is no doubt the earliest to provide a model for others. The model of a standing Buddha might have been copied from a Greek god or a hero or even from a Roman emperor wearing pallium or toga, as the Kushans definitely had diplomatic and commercial relations with the contemporary Roman West. But beyond this, borrowing ceases. The seated Buddha and the figure of the seated or standing Bodhisattva (Fig. 33), the latter a peculiar invention of Gandhāran artists, have no classical or Indian precedent. Statues of Pāñcika, the Commander of the Lord's army, and his consort Hāritī are also local figures *par excellence*. Furthermore, almost all Gandhāra statues were carved in the round.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

The most characteristic feature of Gandhāra sculptures is their frontality. Figuresnormally stare fixedly into one's eyes or are turned completely to right or left. There is seldom movement in their bodies. This can be understood in the light of Kushan sculptures from Khal chayan. These are not strictly frontal but turn slightly with restrained emotions. They are a step towards frontality and a sharp contrast to the highly emotional images of the Hellenistic world and the complete side views of Achaemenid sculpture. The fixed, unemotional frontality of the Kushan art of Gandhāra has obviously been brought from Khalchayan.

[61] Marshall, 1960, pp. 109–12.



FIG. 32. Miralce of Śrāvastī. Lahore Museum.

Attempts have been made to identify portraits in Gandhāra sculptures, such as the two heads from Sahr-i Bahlol and Shpola stupa.[62] But these are the heads of donors detached from their bodies. There may be statues of donors showing characteristic individual

[62] Ingholt, 1957, p. 163, No. 423, p. 194, No. 563.



FIG. 33. Standing Bodhisattva. Lahore Museum.

features and wearing regional costumes but they never represented specific individuals. No doubt in Bactria[63] and Mathura[64] portraits of Kushan rulers and nobility in characteristic Kushan dress are numerous, but there is no such presence of the Kushan nobility in Gandhāra sculpture, not even in the figures of the Buddha and Bodhisattva. In Buddhist art, an individual – ecclesiastical or temporal monk, donor, king or commoner – always remains anonymous.

JĀTAKA STORIES

The Gandhāra panels narrate the *Jātakas* or birth stories of the Buddha, in a simple, clear and lucid way which is in sharp contrast to the confused style of earlier schools, seen at

[63] Rowland, 1970, p. 146, Fig. 86.
[64] Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 138–53.

Bharhut and Sanchi. Although the number of events is limited, the art of narration is simple and easy to understand. Figures in a panel stand out in correct relation to one another with proper spacing between them. Sometimes even perspective is emphasized. In this way a minimum number of figures are needed to narrate a complete story. When more than one story is required on a panel, each is separated from the other with the help of vertically arranged columns, pilasters and recessed panels, or horizontally arranged cornices and mouldings. Normally, the actors of a story are arranged in single file and move from right to left.

RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

We are fortunate in having a better knowledge of the development of religious architecture in Gandhāra. The Kushan contribution is substantial. Except for Shrine 8 at Taxila, almost all Kushan monuments in Gandhāra are Buddhist. Shrine 8 is a square building within an enclosed wall measuring 37 × 37 m relieved with buttresses on each side and nine intercommunicating chambers. One study has associated this shrine with the Kushan occupation of the area, though its exact date and purpose cannot be ascertained.[65]

Stupas and monasteries were the principal buildings of the period, as Hsüan-tsang notices in his account of the Great Vihāra built by Kanishka at Peshawar. It is said to have been built as a thirteen-storey tower with a total height of 213 m. Nothing of the monument survives except the famous inscribed Kanishka casket, now in the Peshawar Museum, and a few sculptures.[66] Among standing monuments, the remains at Takht-i Bahi, Jamal Garhi, Tharelli and the sites of Jaulian, Mohra-Muradu, Kalawan, Pipala, etc. in the Taxila valley are the best examples of the Kushan contribution to Gandhāra architecture.

GANDHĀRA STUPAS AND MONASTERIES

The basis of the Gandhāra monastery is a court or a series of courts open to the sky and surrounded either by cells for monks or by niches to place devotional objects. Connected with the court are usually an assembly hall, refectories and a room for the chief priest on one side and the main stupa encircled by votive stupas of varying sizes on the other. Gandhāra monastic establishments were built exclusively in stone diaper masonry typical of the Kushan period. The entire surface of the walls was covered with a thick coating of lime plaster. The roofs were mainly vaulted and doors and windows were eithertrabeated or corbelled. By the first and second centuries A.D., this type and pattern of monastic

65 Dar, 1980, pp. 91–106.
66 Spooner, 1908/09 pp. 38–59; Dobbins, 1971, pp. 12–40.

architecture had emerged and became fixed all over northern India. Taxila can boast of some of the earliest permanent monasteries.[67] Although the development of monasteries in Gandhāra antedates the arrival of the Kushans (cf. the Dharma-rājika stupa), it was here that the pattern of monastic establishment was perfected and became popular. A large number of such establishments in Gandhāra, their sizes, cultural content, elaborate facilities and architectural embellishments, clearly point to the economic prosperity of the period and the patronage accorded to the development of art.

ORNAMENTATION

The Gandhāra stupa with its carved base, circular drum and spherical dome, together with its sculptural embellishments, marks a development from the primitive types known at Sanchi and Bharhut and at Dharmarājika (Taxila), Shankaradara (Swat) and Manikyala. The Kushan contribution lies in the overall sculptural ornamentation of the bases and drums of stupas. Apart from stone reliefs fixed on the largest stupas, the smaller votive stupas were usually embellished with stucco figures of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas and devotees set in niches, and with figures of Atlantes, elephants, lions, caryatids, yakṣīs, etc., crouching under cornices and supporting the load of each receding terrace of the stupa base. A variety of arches, pediments, debased Corinthian capitals, dentils, merlons, rosettes and lotuses abound in both stone and stucco. The debased example of an Ionic capital in stucco is known from the Pipala stupa at Taxila. Sometimes figures of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas were set in the foliage of Corinthian capitals carved in stone. Huge Corinthian capitals, set up on pilasters or a round column, are known from Taxila and elsewhere. Most of the columns and pilasters used as architectural pieces were probably made either of wood or of some other perishable material because except for a miniature fluted column with a Corinthian capital, now in the Taxila Museum, and an Ionic column also from Taxila, now in the Lahore Museum, no such column has survived.[68]

MINOR ARTS AND COINAGE

There is not much evidence for the minor arts of the period except for the Kushan coinage. It is difficult to allocate to periods the material from Scytho-Parthian and Kushan levels, partly because it comes from unscientific excavations and partly because all these dynasties had the same geoethnic background and were subject to the same sources of influence

[67] Dutt, 1962, pp. 24, 213.
[68] Rowland, 1970, p. 145.

from the contemporary West. The entire material represents the same mixture of classical, Iranian and local forms and techniques that characterizes the art of Gandhāra.[69]

The coins from Gandhāra are the best evidence for the strangely syncretic character of Kushan art, culture and religion. They show a portrait copied from the bust of the Roman emperor Augustus, the first figure of Buddha and an array of twenty-eight deities of Hellenistic Irano-Babylonian and Indian origins, all identified by legends in Bactrian Greek script.

Casting in bronze and copper was not as common in Gandhāra as sculpting in stone, stucco and terracotta. A few bronze statues are known from Sahr-i Bahlol, [70] Chinkolai (Swat) and other places.[71] These, however, appear to be later than the Kushan period under review, but all the nine metal statuettes from the Sirkap site of Taxila come from the two last strata and can conveniently be dated to the first and second centuries A.D. With the exception of one thin repoussé copper bust in a medallion, all the others are solid cast in open or piece-moulds.[72] Among these are figures of purely Graeco-Roman origin such as Harpocrates, Cupid, Psyche and Aphrodite as well as Hindu and Buddhist figures. Metal sculptures from other places are mainly Buddhist.

TERRACOTTA FIGURINES

It is interesting to note that not a single terracotta figurine has been reported from the limited excavations of the Kushan city of Sirsukh in Taxila. However, the art of making terracotta and clay figures continued at Taxila, as elsewhere, until the fifth century A.D. Despite some borrowings from Hellenistic motifs, this terracotta art, 'in its own way, was just as original, forceful and independent as the Gupta Art of Hindustan and more so than the contemporary Byzantine Art in the West'.[73] Slip casting that is, the use of crushed stone and clay to make terracotta figures, was introduced for the first time at Taxila and became popular throughout the Kushan period.[74]

The Kushan craftsmen inherited the art of making figurines in terracotta or clay from their predecessors, the Mauryas, Indo-Greeks, Scythians and Parthians.[75]Their figurines included human, animal and other toy models. The figurines were either hand-made or wheel-turned to make a hollow body that was later moulded by hand to a human or animal

[69] Dar, 1977, pp. 61–89.
[70] Rowland, 1970, pp. 185–6.
[71] Hallade, 1968, p. 86, Plate 62, p. 168, Plate 128.
[72] Marshall, 1951, Vol. II, pp. 604–6.
[73] Ibid., p. 442.
[74] Mian, 1974, p. 206.
[75] Marshall, 1951, Vol. II, pp. 435–72; Wheeler, 1962; Dani, 1965/66 pp. 46–109.

shape. Figures were also cast in single as well as double moulds. Sometimes, faces were moulded and fixed to hand-made bodies.[76] Almost all these types began with the Indo-Greeks and continued through the Parthian period up to the end of the Kushans.[77] According to Dani, the real Gandhāra terracotta human figurines, with well-formed heads and beautiful faces, were developed during the Middle Kushan period.[78] Among animal figurines, bodies were either solid or hollow. Bulls, horses, elephants, camels, monkeys, dogs, rams and goats were the most popular, but we also find tigers, snakes, crocodiles, pigs, birds, bird chariots and toy carts.

JEWELLERY

The inventory of specimens of Gandhāra jewellery and ornaments that can definitely be dated to the Kushan period is not very long. However, this scarcity of material is amply compensated for by the profusion of jewellery represented in Gandhāra sculpture. For example, the figures of Bodhisattva, Hāritī and other females are shown wearing gorgeous jewellery items that are not very different from the specimens of the same or slightly earlier period. A collection of 180 items from the last stratum of Sirkap, [79] thirteen from Tor Dheri, three from the Rawalpindi area and seventy-two from Palatu Dhen[80] and a few other gold ornaments reportedly from the Taxila region, now preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, [81] and the Cleveland Museum of Arts[82] etc., is all that we have of Kushan jewellery from Gandhāra. To this can perhaps be added the famous bejewelled gold casket and thirty ornaments from Bimaran of slightly earlier date.[83]

The Gandhāra jewellery displays a variety of styles and techniques. The representation of jewellery on statues throws light on the Kushan fashion of bedecking individuals with ornaments. Men wore jewellery as much as women, whereas before and after the Kushans, the wearing of personal ornaments was the prerogative of ladies alone. The richness of ornaments depended on the status of the person wearing them. Bodhisattvas, kings and queens, men and women of noble birth and even deities are always shown wearing heavy jewellery. Commoners either wore samples of ornaments or none at all.

[76] Mian, 1974 p. 206.
[77] Dani, 1965/66 p. 47.
[78] Ibid., pp. 43, 65.
[79] Marshall, 1951, II, pp. 616–37.
[80] Marshall, 1902/03, pp. 172, 185–99.
[81] Hallade, 1968, Plates IX and XI
[82] . Anon., 1953, p. 200.
[83] Wilson, 1941, p. 71.

FOREIGN INFLUENCE

The Taxila collection of jewellery is predominantly Graeco-Roman in character, [84] but Gandhāra jewellery generally shows the same range of classical, Iranian, Sarmatian and Indian forms and techniques that we see in the art of Gandhāra. These reflect current trends and taste, and show how the Gandhāra types developed out of earlier ones. The commonest types of Gandhāra jewellery include earrings of Ieech-and-pendant type, necklaces, neck-bands, bangles, bracelets and armlets, anklets, girdles, hairpins, amulets of great variety, etc., and are usually worn by Bodhisattvas. There is also a wide variety of fingerrings with or without encrusted gems and seal impressions. Decorative items, such as broches, turban pins, and miniature gold figures of Cupid, Psyche, animals, birds, flowers and necklaces with fanciful designs are known from Taxila, but waist-cords, bejewelled breast-chains and footwear are known only from statues. Quintus Curtius *(History of Alexander* 9.1.5) provides an interesting reference to the golden staff set with beryls and jewelled golden sandals of Sopeithes, the King of the Salt Range and a contemporary of Alexander the Great.

Gandhāra jewellery shows a fully developed stage of the crafts of granulation andfili-gree, which the Gandhāra goldsmiths borrowed from Western Asia, and the art of incrus-tation of gems, which the Orient lent to the West. Technically, Gandhāra ornaments were made with dies and by hammering, casting, moulding (lost-wax method) and repoussé. The forty-two pieces of silverware, [85] all belonging to the Late Parthian and Early Kushan periods, clearly show that the crafts of the silversmith and coppersmith were equally devel-oped. Whereas much of the Taxila ware reflects Gracco-Roman culture in vessels such as askoi, phialai, mesomphaloi, aryballoi, kantharoi, paterae and goblets, copper and bronze vessels show a mixture of Western and Central Asian elements and predominantly local influences. Also, almost all types are represented in pottery forms, suggesting a uniform Gandhāra culture during the first and second centuries A.D.

Much other material, such as gems, seals carved with a variety of designs, bone, ivory, shell and glass objects and a wide range of beads, has been excavated from numerous cities and stupa sites. The best examples of ivory are from Taxila[86] and Begram, [87] all clearly showing how deeply this art was related to local craftsmanship.

Precious and semi-precious stones were used for making seals and jewellery, agate, amethyst, carnelian, chalcedony, crystal, garnet, jasper, lapis lazuli onyx and turquoise.

[84] Marshall, 1951, II, p. 616; Sharif, 1978 pp. 46–7.
[85] Marshall, 1951, Vol. Ill, pp. 564–606.
[86] Ibid., Vol. Ill, pp. 199 et seq.
[87] Rowland, 1971.

Glass, marble, mother-of-pearl, shell, steatite, ivory and bone were used for beads, which were made in a variety of shapes – domical, spherical and tubular – in animal and bird forms. They were perforated from one or both sides and polished.

A SUMMARY

In brief, the Kushan art of Gandhāra was a living art open to influence from within and without. It absorbed the earlier Graeco-Bactrian traditions current in the area and was also receptive to ideas and trends of the contemporary West through international trade and commerce. Gandhāra acted as the hub from which Kushan art spread in many directions to places such as Mathura, Devnamori and Amaravati in India and towns in Afghanistan and Central Asia. As a result of recent discoveries at Khalchayan, Ay Khanum and Surkh Kotal, there is now no doubt that some form of Hellenistic school lay behind Gandhāra art, but it is wrong to call it an example of Western art. It has its own individuality, reflecting the socio-religious aspirations of its people. Economic prosperity and peace remained the basis of its popularity and development, and when that was no longer the case the art could not sustain itself: it languished and then disappeared.

Kushan art in Mathura

AGE AND TECHNIQUE

The art of Mathura both precedes and post-dates Kushan art over a total span of about 1,000 years, but the Mathura workshops were most active and productive during the rule of the Kushan emperors, especially Kanishka, Huvishka and Vāsudeva (second and third centuries A.D.), which represent the golden age of Mathura sculpture.[88] The earliest dated specimen of Kushan art at Mathura, the statue of Bodhisattva now in the Sarnath Museum,[89] was made in the third year of Kanishka.[90] Mathura sculptures were carved from the spotted red sandstone quarried at Sikri, near the city, and its craftsmen mastered the technique of carving stone that was liable to be marred by streaks or spots. Some scholars believe that they originally covered the whole carved surface with a layer of polychrome or gilt.[91]

88 Agrawala, 1965, p. 2.
89 Vogel, 1930, p. 107, Plate XXVIIIa.
90 Chanda, 1936, pp. 11, 12, 16.
91 Rowland, 1970, p. 149.

GANDHARAN INFLUENCE AND ROYAL PORTRAITS

Mathura artists, by their central geographical position, were open to influences from both Gandhāra and Amaravati, and they sent their images to a wide range of sacred sites. Typical Mathura sculptures of Kushan date have been discovered at Varanasi, Gaya, Śrāvasti, [92] Taxila[93] and Puṣkalāvatī.[94]

At first sight the style of Mathura seems to be a sequel to that of the stupas at Bharhut and Sanchi, but it is related to two other traditions – the art of Amaravati and the Gracco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra.[95] The gallery of royal portraits from the Devakula at Mat, near Mathura, [96] has given us portrait figures of Vima Takṣuma, Kanishka and Caṣṭana[97] set up in the reign of Huvishka. They are neither in the Gandhāra nor in the Mathura style, but possess an autonomous stylistic character of their own. Vima's seated figure wears a short tunic and heavy felt boots of Central Asian origin.[98] The headless statue of Kanishka shows the Great King standing, wearing a Central Asian stiff mantle (caftan) and heavy felt boots, his right hand resting on a mace and his left holding a broad sword.[99] The posture is rigid, stiff, frontal and hieratic but conveys the valour and kingly virtue of the dynasty (see Fig. 2 Chapter 11).

The Devakula portraits, almost in relief with no suggestion of any three-dimensional form, show clear signs of Hellenistic and Parthian influence.[100] They are the sole examples of portrait sculpture known from ancient India.

Apart from these portraits, the most striking examples of the Kushan art of Mathura are the figures of yakṣas and yakṣīs, nāgas and nāganīs and female (Śālabhañjikā) figures (Figs. 34 and 35), some wanton and sensual. The sculptural art of Mathura has manydis-tinguishing features:

The material used is either red sandstone with creamish spots or buff sandstone, which sometimes contains dull red patches. In certain sculptures efforts to remove the adverse effect of spots or patches through the application of a coat of colour can be seen.

Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism flourished simultaneously at Mathura under the Kushans and icons and shrines of all the three sects were made in large numbers. While

92 Vogel, 1910, p. 28.
93 Khan, 1966.
94 Dani, 1965/66, Plates XVIII, 4–5.
95 Agrawala, 1965, p. 3.
96 Vogel, 1911/12, pp. 120–7.
97 Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 135–53.
98 Vogel, 1930, p. 91, Plate V; Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 144–51.
99 Vogel, 1930, Plate V; Rosenfield, 1967, pp. 144 et seq.
100 Rowland, 1970, p. 149.



FIG. 34. Śālabhañjikā figure on the obverse side of a pillar. Second century A.D. (From H. Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. II, plate 74a, New York, 1968.)

Brahmanism continued to be the religion of the masses, Buddhism received royalpatronage, while Jainism had the following of the rich merchant community.

In this period symbols representing the Buddha in earlier times were replaced by the anthropomorphic representation.

The religious aspects of art had not obliterated its secular spirit. Skilled workers and artisans worked for patrons of different creeds according to demand. The spirit of secularism is seen in the depiction of decorative motifs, social and folk scenes common to all sects.

The assimilation of different artistic forms and their fusion into a distinctive style were the important features of the Mathura school. The natural reflection of contemporary social, religious and political movements has to be evaluated in proper perspective. Mathura art actually served as a bridge to correlate and unite indigenous and alien elements and



FIG. 35. Śālabhañjikā figure on a bracket. (From J. P. Vogel, *La Sculpture de Mathura*, plate XII, Paris/Brussels, 1930.)

successfully accomplished this through its adaptability, and its process of fusion, amalgamation and interaction.

The presentation of female beauty as a vehicle of art was a novel experiment of the Mathura school. In the earlier monuments of Bharhut and Sanchi womenfolk seem unconcerned with this. Their function is either to worship if represented in mundane form or to receive worship if elevated to the superhuman status of devatā or yakṣī. But in the Kushan period the sculptor at Mathura viewed feminine beauty from a different angle. Arrested by a beautiful face, long hair, heavy hips, voluptuous breasts graceful movements, attractive looks and inviting gestures, he transformed his subject into sculptural creations that blended the fervour of sensuous emotions in a religious and spiritual environment.

The names of artists of the Mathura school have been recorded on the pedestals of sculptures – Rāma, Dharma, Sanghadeva, Joṭisa, Dāsa, Śivara (kṣita), Siṅgha, Nāyasa, Deyahu, Vishnu and Jayakula.[101]

VISHNU

Early Brahmanism or Hinduism at Mathura was based on the Vishnu or Vāsudeva cult and Mathura artists made icons of Vishnu and his associates at an early stage. Vishnu figures have been found in different forms. The two-armed representation seems uncommon (Mathura Museum No. 1150). The four-armed images hold a mace *(gadā)* disc *(cakra)* waterpot *(kamanḍalu)* and the fourth hand either remains in protection *(abhaya)* or in boon-bestowing *(varada)* pose (Mathura Museum Nos. 15.912, 15.948, 28.1729 and 34.2520, second deity). Sometimes the mace is replaced by the conch *(śaṅkha)* (No. 15.4267). The lotus *(padma)* does not appear in this period. The eight-armed figures of Vishnu have hands that are broken so the attributes remain obscure (Nos. 15.1010 and 50.3550, and Lucknow Museum No. 49.247). In one sculpture the deity is seen mounted on his vehicle Garuda in bird form (No. 39.2858).

The concept of the incarnation of Vishnu was still in its infancy. The Lucknow Museum stela (No. J.610) probably shows the giant *(trivikrama* or *virāṭ)* form. The boar incarnation *(varāha)* has been identified in another stela (Mathura Museum No. 65.15) (Fig. 36). The deity is lifting the earth, which is seen personified on his left shoulder.[102] A fragmentary sculpture in the Mathura Museum (No. 17.1344) has been interpreted as Vāsudeva crossing the River Jamuna with a basket over his head.[103] Another stela (No. 19.1563) is probably to be identified as Rāma and Sitā.

The cosmic *(caturvyūha)* form of Vishnu is seen in an image of the Mathura Museum (No. 14.392–5) (Fig. 37). Out of the central deity, Vāsudeva or Krishna, emerge other figures from his shoulders and head. Balarāma can be recognized from the snake canopy. The high crown and *vanamālā* (garland made of forest leaves and flowers) of Vishnu are noteworthy.

BALARAMA

The cult of Balarāma, the elder brother of Krishna, was already established at Mathura before the Kushans (Lucknow Museum No. G.215). In the Kushan period, figures of Balarāma have two or four arms holding a cup in the left hand with the right hand raised

[101] Sharma, 1984, p. 139.
[102] Joshi, 1972, p. 7.
[103] Ibid., p. 16.



FIG. 36. Boar incarnation. Buff sandstone. Second century A.D. (length 35 cm). Mathura Museum No. 65.15.

up in the protection pose *(abhaya mudrā)*. Conceived as the incarnation of the cosmic serpent Śeṣa, Balarāma is shown with a snake canopy (Mathura Museum No. 14.406) (Fig. 38). Sometimes he carries a lion-staff plough *(siṃhalaṅgala bala)*. Rarely, between Balarāma and Krishna, stands a female deity, identified as Ekānaṅśā, sister of the two brothers (Mathura Museum No. 67.529).

Numerous Śiva finds suggest that Mathura was also a seat of the Śiva cult. In the Kushan period Śiva is represented in two forms: *liṅga* the phallic form with the nut portion projecting from the shaft and fastened with a flat band (Mathura Museum No. 83.3) (Fig. 39), and *puruṣa* the anthropomorphic form. Quite often a combined aspect is seen and in this case the *liṅga* is shown with one, two, four or five faces. The beads known as *tatpuruṣa*, *aghora*, *vāmadeva*, *sadyojāta*, *īśāna* face east, south, west, north and upper direction respectively. The Ardhanārīśvara form (a composite figure of Śiva and his spouse Parvatī) is also from the Early Kushan period. In this form the right half is generally represented as male with matted hair, a half vertical third eye and the organ in an upward position *(ūrdhvaretas)*. The left female half is shown as graceful with earrings and anklets (Mathura Museum No. 34.2520) (Fig 40, first deity).



FIG. 37. Bust of Vāsudeva in cosmic *(vyūha)* form. Buff sandstone. Second century A.D. (height 45 cm). From Saptasamudrī well. Mathura Museum No. 14.392–5.

KARTTIKEYA

Skanda or Kārttikeya was also a favourite deity in Kushan Mathura. The texts describe him as son of Śiva *(Matsyapurāṇa* Chapter 158, and *Kumārasambhava* of *Kālidāsa* 10.57–60) and also of Agni *(Mahābhārata*, *Vanaparva*, Chapters 225–30 and *Skandapurāṇa*, *Māheśvarakhaṇḍa*, Chapters 27–31). He is known as a god of war and commander of the divine army *(devasenani)* In the Kushan period he is shown as a two-armed young man, wearing a crown or turban, holding a long spear in his left hand with his right hand in the protection pose (Lucknow Museum No. 57.458). An image in the Mathura Museum (No. 42.2949) is dated Year 11. He is sometimes shown with a cock or a peacock (Mathura Museum No. 33.2332). A bronze plaque from Sonkh has been identified as Kārttikeya.[104] His nativity is sometimes shown with one or more mother goddesses *(mātṛkās)* holding a child and with a jar (Lucknow Museum No. 0.250) (Fig. 41). Ganeśa, the younger brother of Kārttikeya, appears late in art; a post-Kushan statuette represents him as an

[104] Härtel, 1976, p. 91, Fig. 34.



FIG. 38. Head of Balarāma with snake canopy. Buff sandstones. Second century A.D. (height 35.5 cm). From Kachahrighat well. Mathura Museum No. 14.406.

elephant-headed nude dwarf, wearing a snake thread *(vyala yajnopavita)* and eating sweet balls *(laddu)* with his trunk (Mathura Museum No. 15.758).

SURYA

The sun god (Surya) in the Kushan period is shown squatting in a car drawn by two horses, wearing an embroidered coat, trousers and turban, and holding a stalked lotus bud in his right and a dagger in his left hand. The whole appearance suggests an alien treatment as marked as on the contemporary royal portraits (Mathura Museum No. 12.269) (Fig. 42). These tight features are subsequently relaxed, the number of horses increases to four (No. D.46), and a nimbus resembling the disc of the sun is added. The wings on his shoulders recall the early Vedic concept of the sun bird Garuda.[105]

YAKṢAS

The dominating yakṢ a cult of an earlier period at Mathura was overshadowed by other popular deities under the Kushans. The yakṣas, now grotesque and dwarfish with pot belly (No. C.3), served as attendants. Their mundane nature is depicted as excessive

[105] Banerjea, 1956, p. 434.

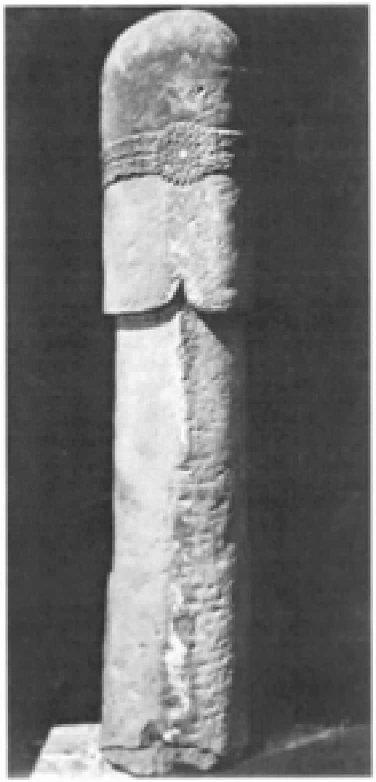


FIG. 39. Śivaliṅga. Near Kankali. Spotted red sandstone. First century A.D. Mathura Museum No. 83.3.

drinking (No. C.2), a scene sometimes explained as Bacchanalian, suggesting a Greek impact through Gandhāra art.[106]

NĀGAS

Nāga (snake) worship was prevalent at Mathura. We find independent images of the nāga deities in human form but surmounted by snake hoods. The site of Sonkh has revealed remains of a nāga shrine of Kushan date.

One lintel depicts the nāgas and nāgīs with a snake scalp, while the devotees or visitors bear the turban (No. SOIV-36) (Fig. 43). A duel between the nāga and Garuda (bird deity) has also been represented (No. 41.2915).

OTHER FIGURES

A large number of female deities or mother goddesses have been recovered from Mathura. Important ones are Gajalakṣmī (No. 34.2520) (Fig. 40 above, third deity), Lakṣmī, Hāritī,

[106] Smith, 1889, Part 1, pp. 140, 156.



FIG. 40. Stela representing, from the left, Ardhanārīśvara, Vishnu, Gajalakṣmī and Kubera. Spotted red sandstone (length 26.5 cm). Mathura Museum No. 34.2520.

Yakṣīs, Mātṛkās, Śaṣṭhī and nāgīs. A popular goddess of the age was Durgā (No. 33.2317). A few sculptures from Mathura suggest that efforts were made to avoid disharmony between different sects. An interesting stela in the Mathura Museum (No. 34.2520) represents four deities together: Ardhanārīśvara, Vishnu, Gajalakṣmī and Kubera (the lord of the yakṣas).

JAINA FIGURES

The excavations conducted by A. Führer at the Kankali Mound, Mathura, yielded hundreds of Jaina antiquities, most of which are housed in the State Museum in Lucknow.[107] These range from the second century B.C. to the twelfth century A.D., but the majority belong to the Kushan period. The āyāgapaṭas serve as the base for the development of the Jaina pantheon; some of them belong to pre-Kushan times and one records the name of the *mahākṣatrapa* Śoḍaṣa (Lucknow Museum No. J.1).

The āyāgapaṭas according to the central theme may be classified differently, that is, *Cakrapaṭa* (representing the wheel, J.255), *Svastikapaṭa* (representing auspicious cross J.252), *Caityapaṭa* (showing the stupa or caitya, J.255; see Fig. 44), with a beautiful railing and gateway flanked by two female dancers and an inscription recording that the stone tablet was set up by the wife of the dancer Phalguyasa for the worship of Arhata, and the *arhatapaṭa* or *tīrthaṅkarapaṭa* when the Jina (main deity; see Fig. 45) is shown, replacing

[107] Smith, 1901.



FIG. 41. Stela showing nativity of Kārttikeya. Buff sandstone. Second century A.D. (length 24 cm). Lucknow Museum No. 0.250.

the symbol (J. 252). Some of these tablets show a variety of beautiful motifs depicted as eight auspicious symbols *(aṣṭamaṅgalacinhas)*.

Jina images of the Kushan period are generally broad-chested, stiff, with shaven head or little hair. The mark of *śrīvatsa* on the chest of a Jina is an essential feature at Mathura. Palms and soles are usually marked with a *triratna* or *cakra* as the mark of a great man *(mahāpuruṣalakṣana)*. In the early period the halo is plain, devoid of any concentric band but carved with a scalloped border *(hastinakha)*. With the passage of time the decoration on the field of the halo increases (Fig. 46).

It is not possible to identify all the Jinas of the Kushan period, because we do not know what developed subsequently. Ṛ Ṣ abhanātha can, however, be identified by the fall of hair on the shoulders, and Pārśva or Supārśva by the snake canopy. The depiction of life events of Jinas is rare, but a Kushan-period stela has been explained as illustrating the episode of the transfer of the embryo of the last Jina Mahāvīra from the womb of Brāhmaṇī Devananandā to that of Kṣatriyāṇī Triśalā (No. J.626). Neminātha, the twenty-second Jina, who is described as cousin of Krishna, was represented flanked by Balarāma and Krishna.



FIG. 42. Surya clad in northern style. Buff sandstone. From Kankali Mound. Late first century A.D (height 48 cm). Mathura Museum No. 12.269.



FIG. 43. Lintel showing the scene of nāga family. Red sandstone. From Sonkh. A.D. 100 (length 121 cm). Mathura Museum No. SOIV-36.

BUDDHIST SCULPTURES

Kushan art of Mathura earned its real fame in producing hundreds of excellent Buddhist images, which were both installed in Mathura region and exported. Before the Buddha was represented in human form, his presence was conveyed through different symbols: the elephant for his Birth; the horse for the Great Renunciation; the tree for his Enlightenment; the wheel for turning the Wheel of Law; and the stupa for his Death. The credit of introducing



FIG. 44. Inscribed ayāgapata carved with stupa railing. Buff and red sandstone. From Kankali Mound (50 × 70 cm). Lucknow Museum No. J.255.

the Buddha figure is sometimes given to Gandhāra and sometimes to Mathura, but there is some evidence that the evolution of the Buddha figure at Mathura came slightly before the commencement of Kushan rule.[108]

Pre-Kanishka Buddha figures are characterized by the snail shell *(kaparda)* on the head, inconspicuous drapery marked by an incised line on the left shoulder, a deep navel, and a pedestal with three tiers or two lions supporting the seat.

The Buddha's corpulent body has a crude, primitive and archaic look. In due course a set formula and an ideal form of the Buddha was developed. He is shown in high relief, with a nimbus bearing a scalloped border, a back slab showing foliage of the bodhi tree, two celestials hovering in the sky and acolytes flanking the deity. The top of his hair is shaped like a snail shell, the rest of his head being smooth. He has small earlobes, a circular *(ūrṇā)* mark on his forehead, almond-shaped, wide-open eyes and a slightly smiling expression.[109]A good example is the Buddha from the Katra Mound (Fig. 47).

During the reign of Huvishka the Mathura school introduced a notable change in the Buddha's drapery, which now covers both shoulders *(ubhayān-sika saṅghātī)* (Mathura Museum No. A.4) (Fig. 48), and then becomes thick and stiff with broad pleats (Mathura

108 Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 1949, p. 171.
109 Sharma, 1984, pp. 176–7.



FIG. 45. Head of Tīrthaṅkara. Second century A.D. (From H. Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. II, plate 73, New York, 1968.)

Museum No. 76.17) (Fig. 49).[110] The distinction between the Buddha and the Bodhisattva is now made clear – the Buddha being shown as a monk while the Bodhisattva is adorned with a crown and the ornaments lending him a princely look (Lucknow Museum No. B.26) (Fig. 50). Beside the protection *(abhaya)* pose, others are now introduced: meditation *(dhyāna);* earth touching *(bhūmisparśa);* preaching or teaching *(upadeśa* or *vyākhyāna);* and turning the wheel of law *(dharmacakrapravartarna)*. The Buddhist pantheon grew manifold.

IMPACT

The sculptural art of Mathura in the Kushan period was extremely creative (Figs. 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56,), and its products were in heavy demand throughout ancient northern India. Mathura borrowed several features from Gandhāra, but contributed much in

110 Sharma, 1984, pp. 220–3



FIG. 46. Inscribed *Sarvatobhadra* (quadruple) Jaina image with Pārśvanath on one side each. Red sandstone. From Kankali Mound (height 54 cm). Lucknow Museum No. J.235.

return. The *Jātaka* narration, the lotus seat, the drapery covering one shoulder of the Buddha and the lion throne were some of the important Mathura features later adopted in Gandhāra. The second phase of development at Amaravati owes much to Mathura, notably the change from the aniconic to the anthromorphic representation of the Buddha; the impact of Gandhāra at Amaravati came through the Mathura school;[111] and the Sarnath school, which flourished in the Gupta period, developed from the Late Kushan art of Mathura.[112]

[111] Coomaraswamy, 1965, pp. 70, 71.
[112] Saraswati, 1975, p. 135; Sharma, 1984, p. 241.



FIG. 47. Buddha inscribed as Bodhisattva. Spotted red sandstone. Late first century A.D. From Katra Mound (height 71 cm). Mathura Museum No. A.1.



FIG. 48. Buddha with drapery covering both shoulders. Spotted sandstone. Second century A.D. (height 81 cm). Mathura Museum No. A.4.



FIG. 49. Buddha with Gandhāra influence on cloth. Spotted red sandstone. Second century A.D. From Govindnagar (height 115 cm). Mathura Museum No. 76.17.



FIG. 50. Crowned Bodhisattva head. Spotted red sandstone. Second century A.D. From Kankali Mound (height 50 cm). Lucknow Museum No. B.26.



FIG. 51. Railpost showing a woman squeezing her hair. Spotted red sandstone. Second century A.D. From Naroli (height 61 cm). Mathura Museum No. 18.1509.



FIG. 52. Stair railpost representing a woman with a basket. Red sandstone. Second century A.D. From Kankali well (height 59 cm). Mathura Museum No. 14.369.



FIG. 53. Railpost showing a woman fastening her garment. Red sandstone. First–sceond century A.D). From Bhuteswar (height 142 cm). Mathura Museum No. J.4.



FIG. 54. Bracket from a gate of the nāga shrine with a woman under a tree. Spotted red sandstone. From Sonkh (height 77.5 cm). Mathura Museum No. SOIV-27.



FIG. 55. Railpost showing Ṛṣyaśringa in ecstasy. Spotted red sandstone. First–second century A.D. From Chaubara Mound (height 80 cm). Mathura Museum No. J.7.



FIG. 56. Parasol carved with lotus and auspicious motifs. Spotted red sandstone. From Maholi-ki-paur (111 × 105 cm). Mathura Museum No. 76.12.

16

LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS IN GRAECO-BACTRIA AND THE SAKA KINGDOMS*

J. Harmatta

Contents

Old Persian, Imperial Aramaic, Old Bactrian

Script and writing appeared in eastern Iran long before the Yüeh-chih conquest of Bactria. Under Darius I, Old Persian administration and chancellery practice had probably been introduced into the eastern Achaemenid satrapies. This involved the use of the Old Persian language and cuneiform script, and the adoption of the Aramaic language and script as intermediary instruments of communication between administrative centres. The royal weight inscribed with an Old Persian cuneiform text from Bost (modern Qalʿă-i Bist in Afghanistan) shows this development, even though it was prepared at the royal court in western Iran; and the borrowing by the Prakrit languages of such important terms as Old Persian *dipi*- (document), *nipis*- (to write) and *nipistaṃ* (inscription) clearly proves the use of Old Persian in the Indus territories belonging to the Achaemenid Empire at that time.

* See Map 3.

The introduction and use of Aramaic chancellery practice was, however, of much greater importance for the spread of literacy in the Middle East. Although not a single Aramaic document from the Achaemenid period has so far come to light in eastern Iran, indirect evidence exists. Kharoṣṭhī script came into being under the influence of the Aramaic alphabet. Consequently, the creation of Kharoṣṭhī indirectly attests to the use of Imperial Aramaic in the royal chancelleries of the eastern satrapies of the Achaemenid Empire on the borders of India.

The use of Aramaic as an intermediary language did not come to an end when the Old Persian Empire fell. As in other satrapies, the administration and the Aramaic chancelleries still continued to function under the Hellenistic rulers who succeeded them, and Greek could not immediately replace Aramaic as the chancellery language in Bactria and Gandhāra. There is abundant evidence for the survival of Aramaic in these territories in the rock and pillar inscriptions set up by Aśoka, the Mauryan king. Six have been discovered so far: (a) the pillar edict of Taxila; (b) the stone inscription of Pul-i Darunta; (c) the rock edict of Kandahar (Kandahar I); (d) the second inscription from Kandahar (Kandahar II); (e) the first rock inscription (milestone) from Laghman (Laghman I); and (f) the second rock inscription (milestone) from Laghman (Laghman II). As a sample of these texts, the rock edict of Kandahar (Kandahar I) (Fig. 1) may be quoted here (Iranian terms are italicized):

1. šnn X *ptyty* ‘byd zy mr’n prydrś mlk’ qšyṭ’ mhqšṭ

   For ten years *penitence* was made by Our Lord, Priyardarś, the king, enforcing the truth.

2. mn ’dyn z‘yr mr‘’ lklhm ’nšn wklhm ’*dbšy*’ hwbd

   Since that time evil decreased for all men and he made disappear the *quarrelsome*.

3. wbkl ’rq’ r’m *šty* w’p zy znh bm’kl’ lmr’n mlk’ z‘yr

   And *happiness* arose on the whole earth. And besides, this [is] concerning the food: for Our Lord, the King, little

4. qṭln znh lmḥzh klhm’nšn’thḥsynn wzy *zwny’* ’ḥdn

   is slaughtered. Seeing this all men have ceased [to do it]. And those men who were catching *living beings*,

5. ’lk’nšn *ptyzbt* knm zy *prbst* hwyn’lk’thḥsynn mn

   have been *forbidden* [to do it]. Thus, who *were bound* [by their passions], those ceased to



FIG. 1. The bilingual inscription of Aśoka from Kandahar (Kandahar I). Third century B.C.

6. *prbsty whwptysty* l'mwhy wl'bwhy wl*mzyšty'* 'nšn

   be bound. And *good obedience* [is observed] to his mother and to his father and to the elder men

7. 'yk 'srhy ḥlqwt' wl' 'yty dyn' lklhm 'nšy' ḥsyn

   as destiny imposed upon him. And legal proceeding does not exist against anyone who is pious [literally: all pious men].

8. znh hwtyr lklhm 'nšn w'*wsp* yhwtr

   This benefited all men and will *in all* benefit [them].

Without doubt, the language of this text is Aramaic, but it contains a number of Iranian terms and some errors from the strict viewpoint of Aramaic linguistic usage. This fact has led philological research to assume that what we are dealing with here is an Iranian text written by Aramaic heterography.

As, however, the inscription contains inflected Aramaic nominal and verbal forms, there can be little doubt that the author of the text still intended to write Aramaic. Accordingly, the linguistic features, unusual from the viewpoint of Aramaic, are to be explained by the character of Aramaic as an intermediary language, permanently exposed to the interferences of the mediated languages.

In the Aramaic of Aśoka's rock and pillar edicts we must reckon with the interferences of three languages – Old Persian, Old Bactrian and Prakrit. For Old Persian influence on Aramaic, we have abundant evidence in the Aršāma letters and the Aramaic documents of Elephantine. In the Aramaic inscriptions of Aśoka Old Persian interference is limited to some important administrative terms: *hwnštwn* – Old Persian *hu-ništāvan-* 'good document', Biblical Aramaic *nštwn*, Imperial Aramaic *nštwn*' – and *krpty* = Old Persian *kāra-paθī-* 'army road' (from Old Persian *kāra-* 'army', unknown in Avestan, and Old Persian *paθī-* 'road' as against Avestan *paθa-*, *pantay-*, *paθ-* 'road').

The interference with Aramaic of 'Old Bactrian', that is, the language of ancient Bactria, was obviously very important and is therefore given a detailed separate analysis in a subsequent part of this chapter.

The interference of Prakrit is mainly felt on a semantic and syntactic level. The texts were translations of Prakrit originals, full of religious terms, which had no exact equivalents in Aramaic. The translators had to resort to semantic borrowings, as, for example, Prakrit *dhaṃ ma-* 'piety' = Aramaic *qšyṭ*' 'truth', Prakrit *pāpa-* 'evil' = Aramaic *mr*'' 'malady', Prakrit *porānā pakiti* 'according to ancient rule' = Aramaic '*yk* '*srhy ḥlqwt*' 'as destiny imposed', etc., or to the religious vocabulary of another Iranian language, different from Old Persian, as, for example, Prakrit *sacce* 'veracity' = Avestan *∂r∂zušā-* (original meaning, 'veracity'), Prakrit *guru-* 'master' = Avestan *mazišta-* 'the greatest', etc. There are simple transcriptions in Aramaic letters of Prakrit passages and Prakrit interference can be observed even on a syntactic level. The word order *b'lwl m'h* 'in the month Elul' cannot be explained either by Aramaic or by Iranian linguistic usage because the correct order of words would be *yrḥ 'lwl* in Aramaic and *m'h 'lwl* in Iranian. In Sanskrit and Prakrit, however, the word order is inverted, for example, *Māghamāse* 'in the month Māgha', *Pauṣamāsa-* 'in the month Pauṣa', etc. Consequently the phrase *b'lwl m'h* owes its word order to Indian Sanskrit or Prakrit interference.

The survival of Aramaic

The use of Aramaic script and language for administrative and economic records apparently survived up to the middle of the second century B.C. An Aramaic ostracon found at Ay Khanum (hitherto undeciphered) reads:

Column 1	*Column 2*
Line x + 1]*IIII*	Line x + 1 *zbyn XII kwnywk II*
x + 2]*ṣ̌bwk X IIIII*	Line x + 2 *kwrkln ś XII ḥmwk [XX]X̣X̣*

Note: = faint letters (except *ḥ*, being the transcription of *ḥēθ*), [ ]= disappeared letters.

The record is written in two columns of which the upper parts are missing. The beginnings of lines x + 1 and x + 2 of Column 1 are also broken off but the contents can be restored. The text consists of an enumeration of names and quantities of grain. The keyword of the record is abbreviated in the form *ś*, which must represent Aramaic *ś*‘*rn* ‘barley’. The text of the ostracon can thus be interpreted:

Column 1	*Column 2*
Line x + 1 [N.N.] *IIII*	Line x + 1 *Zbēn XII Kav Nēvak II*
x + 2 [*Ux*]*śebovak X VIIII*	x + 2 *Kur Kalān b*(*arley*) *XII equal to* [*XX*]*XX*

The measure for grain might have been the *’eφā* (36.44 l) which was probably mentioned in the lost first line. The indication *ś* ‘barley’ in line x + 2 of Column 2 suggests that another sort of grain (wheat, millet?) was mentioned earlier. The ostracon therefore represents a notice of the quantities of grain delivered by the enumerated proprietors to the treasury of Ay Khanum. The Iranian word *ḥmwk *hamōk* ‘equal, like’ introduces the total of the delivered grain.

The names of the proprietors deserve particular attention. *Zbēn* may be explained by Parthian *zbyn* ‘attractive’. *Kav Nēvak* means ‘Lord Brave’, *kav* being the Eastern Iranian title *kavi*-, while the first component of the name *Kur Kalān* may be the Eastern Iranian *kur* ‘youth, boy’ and the second one may be compared to Parthian *kalān* ‘great, big’. The restored name [*Ux*]*šebovak* also occurs on the Greek ostraca of Ay Khanum in the spelling *Oxeboakos* going back to Old Eastern Iranian **Uxšya-bavaka*- ‘grain growing’ (cf. Parthian *b’wg*, ‘seed, grain, fruit’) With the help of these names and of the word *hamōk* we gain a modest insight into the language spoken by the Iranian population of Ay Khanum just before the Yüeh-chih invasion.

The language of ancient Bactria

The exact character of the Iranian language spoken by the ordinary population of ancient Bactria has long been a tantalizing problem for linguistic research. In the fifth and the thirteenth rock edicts of Aśoka, the *Yoṇ a Kaṃ boja* are mentioned as neighbours of Gandhāra living within the borders of the Mauryan Empire. As the name *Yoṇ a* denotes the Bactrian Greeks, linguistic research has presumed that the Iranian elements in the Aramaic inscriptions found at Taxila, Laghman and Kandahar must represent the language of the Kaṃ bojas. However, this logical conclusion only defers a solution of the problem, because the language of the Kaṃ bojas is not known either. It is useless to guess that the language of the Kaṃ bojas (i.e the language spoken by the Iranian population of ancient Bactria) might have been some minor Eastern Iranian language like Ōrmuṛī or Parāčī, because the language, which provided the Iranian basis for Imperial Aramaic in the satrap's chancellery, could only be an important, widely spread language of Bactria. For this language of ancient Bactria, we have as evidence the following:

1. *The testimony of Yāska*

śavatir 'to go' ∼ Avestan *šav*- 'to go' as against Old Persian *šiyav*-, Old Indian *cyavate*.

2. *Iranian terms in the Aramaic inscriptions of Aśoka*

'dbš-y' **∂dβeš*- 'quarrelsome' ∼ Avestan *d∂baēš*-, *ṭbaēš*-, *dvaēš*- 'to quarrel', *ṭ baēšah*-, *dvaēšah*- 'quarrel', *ṭ bišyant*- 'quarrelsome'.

*'rzwš *∂rzuš* ∼ Avestan *∂r∂zav*- (Nom. *∂r∂zūš*) 'true, right', *∂r∂zušā*- 'majority' – original meaning: 'veracity, truthfulness'.

'wsp < **ā vispai* ∼ Avestan *ā* 'in', *vispa*- 'all'.

bg < **baga*- ∼ Old Persian *baga*-, Avestan ∼ *bara*- 'lord, god'.

dmydt-y < **dāmidāta*- ∼ Avestan *dāmi.dāta*- 'creature'.

ḥmwk < **hama-vak-/*hama-uk*- 'equal, like < saying the same'.

hwnštwn < **hu-nistāvan*- ∼ Old Persian **hu-ništāvan*- 'good document', represented by Biblical Aramaic *nštwn* Imperial Aramaic *nštwn*' 'document'.

*hwptysty *hu-paθyasti* 'good obedience' ∼ Avestan *paiti.a-stay*- 'obedience'.

hwwrdh < **hu-vardaθa*- 'good growth' ∼ Avestan *var∂daθa*- 'growth, increase'.

*hww[yšt-y'] < *hvōišta*- 'elder' ∼ Avestan *hvōišta*- 'supreme, first, eldest'.

*m'h *māh*- 'month' ∼ Old Persian, Avestan *māh*- 'moon, month'.

*krpty *kāra-paθī* 'army road' ∼ Old Persian *kāra*- 'armed people, army', Old Persian *paθī*- 'road'.

mzyšt-y' **mazišta*- 'elder' ∼ Avestan *mazišta*- 'the greatest'.

prbst **pari-basta-* 'bound' ~ Avestan *band-* 'to bind', Pahlavi *parvastan*, *parvand-* (< **pari-band-*) 'to surround, enclose'.

prbsty **pari-bastay-* 'constraint'; see above.

ptyty **patitay-* ~ Avestan *paititay-* 'discharge, expiation'.

ptyzbt **pati-zbāta-* 'forbidden' ~ Avestan *zbā-* 'to call', PPfP *zbāta-*, Old Persian *patiy-zbā-* 'to prohibit, forbid'

shyty **sahyatai* ~ Avestan sə́ h-, Old Persian *θah-* Pass 'to be called'.

šty **šātay-* ~ Avestan *šātay-* 'happiness, joy', Old Persian *šiyātay-*.

trḥ'trh **θri-hāθra-* 'tripartite pinfold, caravanserai' ~ Avestan */θray-θri-* 'three', *hāθra-* 'section, pinfold'.

zwn-y' **žīvana-* 'living being' ~ Avestan *ǰva-* (Avestan spelling for *ǰīva-* 'living'), Avestan *ǰvana-* (Avestan spelling for *ǰīvana-* 'living').

3. *Bactrian names*

(In Greek transcription: (*ē* = ēta (*η*), *ō* = ōmega (*ω*), *y* = ypsilon (*υ*), *ou* = omicron + ypsilon (ου)):

Aitatēs **Ētāt*, by haplology from **Aitatāt-* 'glitter, lustre' ~ Avestan *aēta-* 'glittering'.

Apama **Apamā* 'supreme' < **Upamā-* ~ Avestan *upəma-* 'highest'.

Artabazos **Arta-bāzu-* 'whose stay is Arta' ~ Avestan *arəta-* 'right, law, holy right' and Avestan *bāzu-* 'arm, stay.'

Artanēs (read *Aryandēs* formerly) **Artāna-* 'righteous' (cf. Avestan *arəta-* above).

Artasouras **Arta-sūra-* 'mighty by Arta' ~ Avestan *arəta-* 'holy right' and Avestan *sūra-* 'mighty'.

Atrosōkēs **Ātrə-sauka-* ~ Avestan *ātrə.saoka-* 'firebrand'.

Barzandēs **Barzand-* ~ Avestan *bərəzant-* 'high'.

Dataphernēs **Dāta-farnah-* 'who has glory by right' ~ Avestan, Old Persian *dāta* 'right', Old Persian (from Median) *farnah-* 'glory'.

Itanēs **Vitana-* 'corpulent' ~ Avestan *tan-* 'to extend'.

Katanēs **Kātana-* 'honourable' ~ Avestan *kāta-* 'honoured'.

Mithroaxos **Miθra-vaxša-* 'advancing by Mithra' ~ Avestan *vaxš-* 'to grow, rise, advance'.

Oxyartēs **Vaxšu-varta-* 'chosen by Vaxšu' ~ Avestan *var-* 'to choose'.

Oxēboakos < **Uxšya-bavaka-* 'grain growing'; cf. above.

Oxydatēs < **Vaxšu-dāta-* 'begotten by Vaxšu'.

Orsodatēs < **Ṛ šva-dāta-* 'legitimately begotten' ~ Avestan *ərəšva-* 'legal, legitimate'.

Oumanēs < **Vohu-manah-* ~ Avestan *Vohu-manah-*.

Xaranos < **Xšarana-* 'seedy' ~ Saka *ṣara* 'seed', Ossetic *äxsär* 'nut'.

Parzos **Parza*- < **Parča*- 'donor'; cf. Old Indian *parc*- 'to mix, fill, increase, etc.', *parka*- 'mixture, gift'.

Rōxanē **Rōxšanā* 'brightness'; cf. Avestan *raoxšnā*- 'light'.

Sinokratēs (Hellenized from **Sinochratēs*) **Čina-xratu*- 'who has wish for wisdom' ~ Avestan *činah*- 'desire, wish', *xratu*- 'wisdom'.

Sōchrakēs (on a potsherd found at Dushanbe) **Suxrak* 'red' ~ Avestan *suxra*- 'red'.

Spitamenēs **Spita-manah*- 'of splendid intelligence'.

[*Te*]*irixarēs* **Tīri-xšara*- 'progeny [seed] of Tīr'; cf. above.

Hyspasinēs **Hu-spas-ina*- 'keen observer, spy' or **Hispas-ina*- ~ Avestan *spas*-, Pres. *hispas*- 'to watch'.

In Aramaic transcription:

'hwty **Āhuti*- 'press-hill, offering-hill' ~ Avestan *ā* + *hūtay*- '*haoma*-pressing'.

['*ḥ*]*šbwk* **Uxšebovak* < **Uxšya-bavaka*-; cf. above.

zbyn < **Zbayana*- 'calling, inviting, attractive'; cf. Man. Parthian *zbēn* 'attractive'.

kw **Kav* 'valiant, prince' ~ Avestan *Kavi*-.

kwr **Kur* 'youth' ~ Eastern Iranian *kuru*- 'youth, boy'.

kln **Kalān* 'big' cf. Man. Parthian *kalān* 'big'.

nywk **Nēvak* 'valiant, brave'; cf. Middle Persian *nēv* 'brave, valiant', *nēvak* 'good'.

trmd **Tarmād* < **Tara-māda*- 'oversized, great [hill]' ~ Avestan *tarō* 'beyond, over', *mad*- 'to measure'.

w'šw **W̌ āšava* < **Varta-van*- 'charioteer' ~ Avestan *vāša*- 'chariot'.

wḥšwprt * *Vaxšu-frita*- 'favoured by Vaxšu' ~ Avestan *frāy*-, PPfP *frita*- 'to win the favour of a god'.

From among the fifty-six items of linguistic data discussed above, there are only some terms and names, namely: **huništāvan*- 'good document', **kārapaθī*- 'army road', **pati-zbā*- 'to prohibit, forbid' – being a 'Median' loan-word in Old Persian itself – **Nēvak* (Old Iranian **naiba*- 'good, brave' is only attested in Old Persian so far), **Kalān* (Parthian) which seem to be borrowings from Old Persian or Parthian, and a few others, such as **pari-basta*- 'bound', **pari-bastay*- 'constraint', **māh*- 'month', which might also be of Old Persian origin.

The overwhelming majority (forty-eight out of fifty-six) reflect another Iranian language, different from Old Persian. On the testimony of Yāska, this Iranian language can be ascribed to the Kaṃ bojas living in the neighbourhood of Gandhāra. In Sanskrit and Pālī literature, the Kaṃ bojas were one of the sixteen great peoples of Indian geography. They killed worms, insects, moths, snakes and frogs and thought that they acquired religious merit by this activity. This clearly characterized them as Zoroastrians. They were ruled by

kings and became famous for their horse-breeding. Kauṭilya mentions the Kaṃ boja horse as one of the best breeds for war and speaks of the Kaṃ bojas' military organization and their warlike way of life. All elements of this description concerning the Kaṃ bojas fit excellently the ancient Bactrians.

Moreover, among the linguistic data quoted above, there are a series of special Avestan terms such as **ərzušā-* 'veracity', **dāmidāta-* 'creature', **hupaθyasti-* 'good obedience', **huvardaθa-* 'good growth', **hvōišta-* 'elder', **patitay-* 'discharge, expiation', **sahyatai* 'it is called', **šāti-* 'happiness, joy', **hāθra-*, in **θri-hāθra-*, 'pinfold', **žīvana-* 'living being'. The other part of the linguistic evidence (terms and names) similarly coincides with the language of the *Avesta*: *šav-* 'to go', **ədβaiša-* 'quarrelsome', **ā vispai* 'in all', **baga-* 'lord, god', **mazišta-* 'elder', **Ētāt-*, **Upamā-*, **Artabāzu-*, **Artasūra-*, **Artāna-*, **Barzand-*, **Dātafarnah-*, **Vitana-*, **Kātana-*, **Miθravaxša-*, **Vaxšuvarta-*, **Vaxšubāzu-*, **Vaxšudāta-*, **Uxšyabavaka-*, **R̥ švadāta-*, **Vohumanah-*, **Rauxšanā-*, **Činaxratu-*, ** Suxraka-*, **Spitamanah-*, **Huspasina-*, **Āhūti-*, **Zbayana-*, **Kavi-*, **Kuru-*, **Taramāda-*, **Vāšavan-*, **Vaxšufrita-*. Perhaps the names *Xšarana-* and [*T*]*īrixšara-* represent another Eastern Iranian language.

The testimony of this linguistic data is unambiguous. The overwhelming majority of Iranian terms and names occurring in Aramaic and Greek documents of ancient Graeco-Bactria or mentioned as Bactrian in ancient Greek literature represent a language essentially identical to Avestan. Not even a dialectal difference can be observed between this linguistic evidence and the language of the *Avesta*; the two main dialects of Avestan are both reflected by the material.

On the basis of the linguistic evidence available at present, it therefore seems very likely that Avestan was the language spoken (perhaps in several variants or dialects) and used for administration in Graeco-Bactria and other eastern Iranian countries (such as later Sistan) and the Middle Iranian development of Avestan must have been the most important language in eastern Iran on the eve of the Saka and Yüch-chih invasion.

Greek language and script in Central Asia

Greek language and script had appeared in Central Asia long before the conquests of Alexander the Great. According to Herodotus, Darius I took the surviving Milesians to Susa after the capture of Miletus, and later settled them near the mouth of the Tigris, while the inhabitants of Barke were transferred to Bactria. Earlier historical research presumed that Hellenism was introduced into Central Asia by these earlier Greek settlers. The presence of Greeks in Central Asia of the Achaemenid period can hardly be denied, but the

general spread and use of Greek script and language and the rise of Greek culture were only the result of Hellenistic colonization. In the course of his military expedition against Spitamenes, by order of Alexander, Hephaestion settled Greek and Macedonian soldiers in the villages and cities of northern Bactria and Sogdiana (Arrian IV.16.3; 17.4). As a consequence of this colonization large territories of Central Asia became Hellenized and by way of Graeco-Iranian symbiosis the use of Greek script and language spread among the Bactrian aristocracy.

All remains of the Greek language discovered so far in Central Asia date from the Hellenistic age and represent the *koine*, the standard Hellenistic language. The Greeks of Central Asia must therefore have maintained their close relations with the Hellenistic kingdoms of the Near East until the rise of Parthia and the Roman conquest. The Greek texts found in Central Asia certainly reflect the same cultural level as was achieved in the great centres of Greek civilization. The best evidence for the high culture of the Bactrian Greeks is seen in the Greek translation of Rock Edicts 12 and 13 of Aśoka:

> [.εὐ]σέβεια καὶ ἐγκράτεια κατὰ πάσας τὰς διατριβάς· ἐγκρατὴς δὲ μάλιστά ἐστιν ὃς ἂγ γλώσης ἐγκρατὴς ἦι. Καὶ μήτε ἑαυτοὺς ἐπα[ι]νῶσιν, μήτε τῶν πέλας ψέγωσιν περὶ μηδενός· κενὸγ γάρ ἐστιν· καὶ πειρᾶσθαι μᾶλλον τοὺς πέλας ἐπαινεῖν καὶ μὴ ψέγειν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. Ταῦτα δὲ ποιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς αὔξουσι καὶ τοὺς πέλας ἀνακτῶνται· παραβαίνοντες δὲ ταῦτα ἀκλεέστεροί τε γίνονται καὶ τοῖς πέλας ἀπέχθονται. Οἳ δ'ἂν ἑαυτοὺς ἐπαινῶσιν, τοὺς δὲ πέλας ψέγωσιν φιλοτιμότερον διαπράτονται, βουλόμενοι παρὰ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἐγλάμψαι, πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον βλάπτου[σι] ἑαυτούς. Πρέπει δὲ ἀλλήλους θαυμάζειν καὶ τὰ ἀλλήλων διδάγματα παραδέχεσθα[ι]. Ταῦτα δὲ ποιοῦντες πολυμαθέστεροι ἔσονται, παραδιδόντες ἀλλήλοις ὅσα ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἐπίσταται. Καὶ τοῖς ταῦτα ἐπ[α]σκοῦσι ταῦτα μὴ ὀκνεῖν λέγειν ἵνα διαμείνωσιν διὰ παντὸς εὐσεβοῦντες. Ὀγδόωι ἔτει βασιλεύοντος Πιοδάσσου κατέστρεπται τὴν Καλίγγην. Ἦν ἐζωγρημένα καὶ ἐξηγμένα ἐκεῖθεν σωμάτων μυριάδες δεκαπέντε καὶ ἀναιρέθησαν ἄλλαι μυριάδες δέκα καὶ σχεδὸν ἄλλοι τοσοῦτοι ἐτελεύτησαν. Ἀπ' ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου ἔλεος καὶ οἶκτος αὐτὸν ἔλαβεν· καὶ βαρέως ἤνεγκεν· δι' οὗ τρόπου ἐκέλευεν ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἐμψύχων σπουδήν τε καὶ σύνταξιν πεποίηται περὶ εὐσεβείας. Καὶ τοῦτο ἔτι δυσχερέστερον ὑπείληφε ὁ βασιλεύς· καὶ ὅσοι ἐκεῖ ᾤκουν βραμεναι ἢ σραμεναι ἢ καὶ ἄλλοι τινὲς οἱ περὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν διατρίβοντες, τοὺς ἐκεῖ οἰκοῦντας ἔδει τὰ τοῦ βασιλέως συμφέροντα νοεῖν, καὶ διδάσκαλον καὶ πατέρα καὶ μητέρα ἐπαισχύνεσθαι καὶ θαυμάζειν, φίλους καὶ ἑταίρους ἀγαπᾶν καὶ μὴ διαψεύδεσθαι, δούλοις καὶ μισθωτοῖς ὡς κουφότατα χρᾶσθαι, τούτων ἐκεῖ τῶν τοιαῦτα διαπρασσομένων εἴ τις τέθνηκεγ ἢ ἐξῆκται, καὶ τοῦτο ἐμ παραδρομῆι οἱ λοιποὶ ἡγεῖνται, ὁ δὲ [β]ασιλεὺς σφόδρα ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐδυσχέραινεν. Καὶ ὅτι ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσίν εἰσιν[

Translation of Rock Edict 12:

> ... piety and self-control in all philosophical schools. But mostly self-possessed is that [man] who is master of his tongue. And they do neither praise themselves nor belittle their fellows in any respect. This is, namely, a vain thing. It is better to praise their fellows and not to belittle them in any way. Doing this they aggrandize themselves and captivate their fellows; transgressing this, however, they will be discredited and become odious in the eye of their fellows.

> Who praise themselves and belittle their fellows, those behave too ambitiously: wanting to excel more than the others, the more they do harm to themselves. It is the correct thing to respect one another and to accept the lessons of each other. Doing this they enlarge their knowledge as far as they share with one another that which anyone knows. And one docs not hesitate about saying these to those who arc practising these in order that they do persist in exercising piety at all times.

Translation of Rock Edict 13:

> In the eighth year of his reign Piodasss [= Priyadarśin = Aśoka] conquered Kaliṇga. A hundred and fifty thousand individuals were taken prisoner and deported from there and another hundred thousand were killed and almost the same number of individuals died. From that time on pity and repentance overcame him and he was heavily distressed. Therefore, he gave an order to abstain from [killing] the living beings and made endeavour and effort to exercise piety And the King considered even more grievous the following: as many *brāhmaṇas* and *śramaṇas* are living there, they have to recognize what is useful to the King and to respect and to honour their master, their father and their mother, to like their friends and fellows and not to deceive them, to use their slaves and servants as kindly as possible – if anybody died or was deported from among those who are living under such conditions there, and the others regard this as a matter of secondary importance, the King, however, was hotly angry with these. And that there are … with the other peoples …

On the basis of some stylistic features it is easy to see that Rock Edicts 12 and 13 of Aśoka were translated into Greek by two different translators. Both of them were profoundly erudite and used Greek philosophical terms in their translations. Thus, the phrase *ἀπέχέ σθαι τ ῶ ν έ μφύ χων* 'to abstain from [killing] the living beings' reflects Pythagorean philosophy, while the terms *έ γκράτεια* 'self-control' and *γλώ σης έ γκρατής* 'master of his tongue' go back to the Platonic school. Other expressions such as, for example, *δίδαγμα* 'lesson', *πολυμθία* 'polymathy', *έ κλάμπειν* 'to excel', *έ μ παραδρομῆ ι έ γεῖ σθαι* 'to consider a matter of secondary importance' characterize the vocabulary of Plato, Xenophon, Isocrates and Aristotle. The phrase *οπουδή καὶ* (written *σύνταξις*) occurs in Plato's *Symposium*.

Being well educated and widely read and both writing in *koine*, the two translators differed from each other in their stylistic ambitions. The translator of Rock Edict 12 claimed to be considered an erudite person, therefore he used the Attic form *διαπράτονται*(they behave) because the Attic forms in a text written in *koine* always reflected the writer's claim to erudition.

The other translator, trying to write pure *koine*, used the *koine* form *διαπράσσω* instead of the Attic *διαπράττω* and he created a verbal form *χατέστρεπται*, a hyperkoinism for *χατέστραπται*. The Greek text of Rock Edicts 12 and 13 of Aśoka shows the

importance of the Greek population living in Central Asia and permits a remarkable insight into their intellectual life, erudition and literary ambitions.

The Greek stone inscriptions of Ay Khanum and Takht-i Sangin are another interesting group. The Takht-i Sangin inscription was set up by an Iranian in honour of the god Oxos. Its text runs: (1) Εύ χήν (2) άνέθηκεν (3) ’Ατροσώκης (4) ’‘Οωι ‘Atrosokes dedicated his votive present to Oxos’.

While Greek inscriptions can be taken for granted in the Greek cities of Central Asia such as Ay Khanum, the votive inscription from Takht-i Sangin is surprising because the donor bears an Iranian name and dedicates his votive present to an Iranian deity but does so in Greek script and language. The peculiarity of this attitude becomes clear when we compare the dedication of Takht-i Sangin with the Besnagar pillar inscription of Heliodorus, the ambassador of King Antialcidas. Heliodorus was a Greek who became a worshipper of Vishnu and obviously had a good knowledge of Brāhmī script and Prakrit language as he was sent to negotiate with King Kosiputra Bhāgabhadra. Thus, as a half-Indianized Greek, he erected the Garuda pillar inscribed with a text written in Brāhmī script and Prakrit language.

A Prakrit inscription in honour of an Indian deity prepared by a Greek worshipper of the Indian god can be taken for granted. But in Takht-i Sangin it was an Iranian who used Greek script and language for the dedication of his votive present to the Iranian god Vaxšu. He kept his own native religious ideas and was not Hellenized in this respect; but he probably had some knowledge of Greek and, for lack of a Bactrian written language, used Greek for his dedication, which must also have been understandable to the priests of the sanctuary of Vaxšu. This single inscription clearly attests the spread of Greek script and language among the Bactrian aristocracy and priesthood.

The use of Greek script and language was, however, not limited to the public life of the Greek cities and to the needs of the Iranian sanctuaries. Greek was also introduced into the administration as we can see from the ostraca found in the treasury at Ay Khanum. Its occurrence on the ostraca of Iranian subaltern treasurers as, for example, Artanes, Barzandes, Oxeboakos and Oxy-bazos proves that Iranians working as officers in the Graeco-Bactrian administration were well acquainted with the Greek script and language. If the fragmentary name *]šbwk* on the Aramaic ostracon discussed above is correctly restored as *[’ḥ]šbwk* < **Uxšya-bavaka-*, then the person mentioned might have been identical with *Oxēboakos* occurring on the Greek ostraca as one of the subaltern treasurers at Ay Khanum. In that case, we can assume that the Iranian treasury officers were acquainted with both Aramaic and Greek chancellery practice, and the two scripts and languages were used in parallel in the Graeco-Bactrian administration.

Recent finds of inscribed potsherds at Birkot and Udegram (Swat, Pakistan) prove that Greek language and script were still being used there in the second and first centuries B.C. The Birkot inscription consists of two names which may be restored as (1) Eευθυ]δή[μωι] (2) ['Aμ]ύντα[ς] (1) To [Euthy]de[mos] – (2) Am]ynta[s], that is, it qualifies the pot as a present given by [Am]ynta[s] to [Euthy]de[mos]. On the Udegram potsherd the genitive case of the Greek word νοῦς has been preserved, forming the second part of a compound name like ['Aντι]νόου and indicating the owner of the pot.

There are some indications that the use of Greek survived the fall of the Graeco-Bactrians. At Dilberjin, two inscribed amphorae were found in Room 20. They belong to the fourth building period of the room, which seems to belong to the age of the Great Kushans, since the abandonment of the room between the second and third building periods reflects the events of the Kushan conquest. The inscriptions written in Greek run as follows:

(1) φβροχνδιπσσ (2) φβροχνσσ.

They can only be interpreted on the assumption that they consist of abbreviations:

(1) φ[ορά] βροχ[ίδος] ν διπ[λᾶ] σ[η]σ[άμου]

(2) φ[ορά] βροχ[ίδος] ν [διπλᾶ] σ[η]σ[άμου]

'The load of the vessel: 50 *diploun* sesame [oil]'.

After the rise of the Kushan Empire, the Greek scribes, masons and artisans were working for the new Iranian aristocracy. A Greek architect or mason is still mentioned with the Greek phrase δία Π αλαμήδου 'by Palamedes' in one of the Bactrian inscriptions from Surkh Kotal – a phrase that provides evidence for the survival of the Greeks and their language in the Kushan Empire up to the end of the second century A.D.

The language of the Southern Sakas

In the course of the ethnic movements caused by the rise of the Hsiung-nu nomadic empire, four Saka tribal groups settled on the territory of Parthia and the Later Kushan Kingdom, namely, the Sakas of Sistan, the Sakas of Gandhāra and the Panjab, the Sakas ruling in Mathura and the Sakas of Surashtra and Malwa. For the language of Saka groups, we have only the scattered evidence of names and terms occurring in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī inscriptions. Relatively abundant are the data for the Sakas of Mathura, while for the Sakas of Sistan we only have very scanty evidence.

The Sakas who invaded Bactria appear in the sources under different names, namely, Indian *Śaka-muruṇḍa-*, Chinese *Sai-wang* Greek **Sakarau-kai* Latin **Sa* < *ca* > *raucae*. Of these both Indian *Śaka-muruṇḍa-* and Chinese *Sai-wang* mean 'Saka king' and 'Saka

kings', respectively, in so far as *muruṇḍa-* can be regarded as the Saka title for 'lord, king' and Chinese *wang* as the translation of it. As both the Chinese and the Graeco-Latin sources mention the same peoples as conquerors of Bactria, we have to regard the *Sakaraukai* as identical with the *Śaka-muruṇḍa-* and the *Sai-wang* respectively. Accordingly, the element *-rauk-* in the name *Sakaraukai* must have the same meaning as Saka *muruṇḍa-* and Chinese *wang*. In fact, the word can be compared to Khotanese Saka *rūkya-* 'commander, lord', going back to **rau-kya-*. Saka *muruṇḍa-*, too, has an equivalent in Khotanese Saka: *rrund-* 'possessing power, lord, king'. As it is proved by Saka *muruṇḍa-*, both Khotanese terms *rrund-* and *rūkya-* derive from the root **mrav-/*mru-* 'to declare, to order' as **mrav-ant-* and **mrav-aka-/*mrau-ka-* respectively. Old Iranian **mr-* was reduced to *r-* in Khotanese Saka, while in the language of the Sakas of Gandhāra the initial *mr-* was preserved. It is a remarkable fact that the outcome of Old Iranian **mrav-ant-* and **mrav-aka-* was different in the Western and the Eastern Saka tribal groups. This phenomenon clearly supports the theory according to which the **Sakā mravakā* (> **Sakā raukā*) and the **Sakā Mravantah* (> **Sakā murunda*) – both meaning 'Saka lords' or 'Saka kings' – invaded Bactria and Gandhāra separately. The name 'Saka lords/Saka kings' originally denoted the Saka tribal aristocracy who were alone able to wander away from their territory while the common people remained at home.

Beside the term **rauka-* 'lord, king', the language of the Sakas, settled in Sistan, seems to be represented by the following names, or titles:

Aya (Gāndhārī form), *Azēs* (in Greek script) < **Aza-* 'leader', Kroraina *hinajha-* (**hīnāza-*)'commander of army' title of the King of Khotan.

Ayiliśa (Gāndhārī form), *Azilisēs* (in Greek script) < **Azalīźa-* 'commander-in-chief; literally: leading commander'; **līźa-* represents a variant of *rīźa-* 'desiring, commanding'.

Śpalagadama 'commander of army': *spala* (*śpala* is a Gāndhārī form) is obviously borrowed from Parthian **spāδa* 'army', *gadama* < **kātama-* 'commander' from kā- 'to desire'.

Śpalahora 'commander of army': *spala* 'army' < Parthian **spāδa* 'army', Khotanese Saka *spātā* 'military official' may also be an adoption of Parthian **spāδa-pati-* 'commander of army'. *Hora* < **haura* is the same word as Khotanese Saka *haura-* 'leader, commander'.

Śpaliriśa 'in command of army': *riśa* spelling for *rīźa-* 'desiring, commanding', Khotanese Saka *rriś-* 'to desire'; for the meaning cf. Sogdian *ryz-kr'k* 'sovereign'.

For the language of the Sakas of Gandhāra and the Panjab the following names and terms may be quoted:

Muruṇḍa 'lord, king'.

Kṣaharāta is not a name but a title as is proved by its joint use together with *kṣatrapa*: Liaka Kusulaka is styled as *kṣaharatasa cukṣasa cạ kṣatrapasa* in the Taxila copper plate, *Bhūmaka* is named *kṣaharātasa kṣatrapasa* on his coins, similarly Nahapāna bears the titles *rāño kṣaharātasa kṣatrapasa* in the Nāsik inscriptions. *Kṣaharāta* may go back to Old Iranian **xšaθra-pati-* 'lord of the country', the phonetic development of which was similar to that of Khotanese Saka *spātā* 'military official' < **spāδa-pati-*. Both elements of the term survived in Khotanese Saka: *kṣāra-* 'power, dominion' (< **kṣahra-* < **xšaθra-*) and *-vata-* 'lord' in *pharṣavata-* 'judge' < **fraša-pati-*. *Kṣaharāta-* (< **kṣahra-vata-*) may be the Saka synonym of Old Indian *kṣatrapa-* 'protector of the country'. This would best explain the joint use of the two terms on coins and in inscriptions.

Moga, *Moa* (in Prakrit inscriptions), *Maues* (in Greek script) < **mava-*, **mauka-* 'tiger, hero', Khotanese Saka *mauya-*, *muyi-* 'tiger', Sogdian *myw* 'tiger' < **mavya-*.

Liaka < **rya-ka-* 'youth', Khotanese Saka *rya-* 'youth'.

Kusulaka < **Kuzula-ka-* 'striving, ambitious, energetic', Khotanese Saka *kūys-* 'to seek, search'.

Patika Gāndhārī spelling for Saka **Padika* 'leader', Khotanese Saka *patä*, *patäna* 'before, in front of'.

Jihoṇika < **Jihonyaka-* 'benefactor', Khotanese Saka *jehuñ* a-, *gyehāñ* a- future participle, to *jeh-*, *jih-* 'to heal'.

Manigula < **Mānya-kula-* 'delightful progeny', Khotanese Saka *mānya* 'delighted' and *-kula-* 'progeny' in *ysarkula-*.

Arajhaṃ da < * *āra-zāta-* 'noble-born', Khotanese Saka *āra-* 'worthy, noble', *ysātä* 'born'.

Denipa < **Daina-pavā* 'protector of the religion', Khotanese Saka *pā-* 'to protect', Avestan *daēnā-* 'religion'.

Horaṣada 'rejoicing, rich in gift', Khotanese Saka *hora-*, *haura-* 'gift', *tsāta-*'rich'. Gandhāra Saka *ṣada* 'rejoicing, rich' may also be a borrowing from Parthian or Bactrian *šād*. The joint use of the two terms also occurs in Khotanese Saka: *haura tsāttāña yanāka* 'maker of gifts, riches'.

Jhaṃ danama < **Zāta-nāman-* 'famous by birth', Khotanese Saka *ysā-* (< **ysāta-* cf. Sanskrit *jātam* 'birth, origin'), and *nāma-* 'name', *nāma-tsuta-*'famous'.

Damijada < **Dāmi-zāta-* 'begotten by the creator', Avestan *dāmay-* 'creator', Khotanese Saka *ysāta-* 'born'.

Veśpasi < * *Vayaspasi* < **Baga-spasa-* 'servant of the Lord/God'; Khotanese Saka *υυūυ-* < **baga-* in *υυūvayau* 'of royal origin', *spaśś-* 'to look', *spaśa* 'observer'.

Veśpasia < **Vayaspasika-* < **Baga-spas-ika-* 'servant of the Lord/God'.

Hiye (former reading *hipe)* 'master, *svāmin-*', Khotanese Saka *hiye* 'master, *svāmin-*'.

Achia (former reading *Adhia*) < **Ācayaka-* 'observant, reverent', Khotanese Saka *ācyavaṃ dë* 'observant, reverent' (< **ācaya-vant-*).

Horamurta 'lord of gifts, *dānapati-*', Khotanese Saka *horahaura* 'gift', *murta* < **mrautā* < **mrau-tar-* 'lord, ruler', Khotanese Saka *rautcū* (< **mrauta- čauna-* 'commandant, ruler').

Recently Saka names and words have been discovered in the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of Chilas, which may be connected with the linguistic remains of the Sakas of Gandhāra. In this new material we find the name of the Saka king Moga (see above) and the terms *śaa* (or *śao* 'king') < **śaha-* with the palatalization characteristic of Saka, going back to Old Iranian **xšayaθiya-*, and *śae* 'royal' (< **śāhiya-*).

The language of the third Saka group ruling at Mathura can be characterized by the following linguistic data:

Saγasthana- 'Saka-land' < **Saka-* ethnic name and Gāndhārī *sthana-* 'home, land'.

Horamurṇḍaga < **Hora-mrunda-ka-* 'lord of gifts, *dānapati-*', Khotanese Saka *hora-*, *haura-* 'gift', *rrund-* (< **mrund-*) 'lord, king'.

Horaka-, shortened form of **hora-mrunda* 'lord of gifts, *dānapati-*', Khotanese Saka *haurāka* 'donor, giving'.

Kṣaharāta- < **xšaθra-pati-* 'lord of the country'.

Viśvasika, *viśv aśika* (a title, only borne by persons of foreign, non-Indian, descent) < **Baga-spas-ika-* 'servant of the Lord/God'; cf. *Veśpasi* above. *Viśvasika* represents a hyper-Sanskritized form.

Ulāna 'high-born', Khotanese Saka *ula* 'up' + the suffix *-āna-*.

Rǎ jūvula, Sanskritized form of *Rajūla* < **Rāzūla* < **Rāza-vara-* 'ruling king', **rāza-* 'directing, ruling, ruler', Khotanese Saka *rrays-* 'to direct, rule', *rraysaa-* 'official title', **razaka-* 'ruling, ruler', *vara-* 'excellent, strong'; for the meaning cf. Tocharian B *walo* 'ruler'.

Śuḍasa, *Śoḍāsa* 'who kept the good acts in memory' < **śuḍa-* < **śuratāti-* 'goodness, good acts', Khotanese Saka *śśuru*, *śuru* 'good', beside *śśära-* 'good', *śśäḍe* 'goodness, good acts' (< **śśäratāti-*) and *āsā* 'kept in memory'.

KharapallānaCharobalano (in Greek script) < **xāra-valāna-* 'splendid youth', Khotanese Saka **khāra-* (in *khārāva-* 'shining'), *vala-ka* 'young'.

Hagāna < **Frakāna-* 'leader, chief', Avestan *fraka-* 'forward, adjective' + *-āna-*, Khotanese Saka *hā* < **frāk* 'forward'.

Hagāmaṣa < *_Fraka-amaxša-_ ‘whose chariot proceeds in front’, _Haga-_ < *_fraka-_ ‘forward, adjective’, Khotanese Saka _hā_ < *_frāk_ ‘forward’, -_amaṣa-_ < *_amaxša-_ ‘chariot’, Khotanese Saka _maśpa_ ‘road, way’ < *_amaxšya-pāda-_ ‘cart-path’.

Arṭa < *_Arθya-_ ‘pious’, Avestan _ašya-_ (< *_arθya-_) ‘pious’.

Piśpasri w. < *_Vēspasi-_ < *_Baga-spasi-_ ‘servant-girl of the Lord/God’; cf. _Veśpasi_.

Abuhola w. < *_Abva-hora-_ ‘giving abundant gift’, Khotanese Saka _abvātta_ ‘abundant’, _hora-_, _haura-_ ‘gift’.

Kharaosta, _Charahostei_ (in Greek script, genitive) < *_Xāra-hōsta-_ ‘splendid, mighty’, _hosta-_ < *_hauvasta-_, Khotanese Saka _hauvasta-_ ‘powerful’.

Kamuia w. < *_Kāma-uya-_ ‘who looks down upon the lust’, Khotanese Saka _uy-_‘to survey, look down upon’.

Khalamasa < *_Xāra-masah-_ ‘splendid greatness’, Khotanese Saka _mase_ < *_masāh_ ‘greatness’.

Maja ‘delightful’, Khotanese Saka _māja_ ‘delightful’.

Hayuara < *_Hadabāra-_ ‘helper, companion’ (literally: ‘riding together’), Khotanese Saka _bār-_ ‘to ride’.

Hana w. < *_Xana-_ ‘smiling’, Khotanese Saka _khan-_ ‘to laugh, smile’.

Ayasi (_Kamuia_) w. < *_Azazi_ ‘lady’, Khotanese Saka _aysāṃ je_ ‘girl’, _eysāja_ ‘daughter of a minister’.

Nada ‘leader’, Khotanese Saka _nada-_ ‘leader’.

Diaka < *_Diyāka-_ ‘supervisor’, Khotanese Saka _dai-/ di-_ ‘to see’, inf. _diyāna-_.

Nauluda < *_Nama-rauda-_ ‘worship-heightening’, Khotanese Saka _nauda_ ‘obeisance, worship’ < *_nama-ta-_, _rruv-_ ‘to grow’ (< *_raud-_).

Kalui < *_Kaluka-_ ‘noble’, Khotanese Saka _kala-_ ‘excellent’.

Kusulua Patika cf. above.

Mevaki < *_Mavya-ka-_ ‘tiger, hero’, Khotanese Saka _mauya-_, _muyi_ ‘tiger’.

Miyika < *_Mayaka-_ ‘prosperous’, Khotanese Saka _ggumai_ ‘at will’ < *_vi-m-ÇŐy-ÇŐ-_ ‘pleased’.

Khardaa < *_Xrata-ka-_ ‘wise’, Old Iranian _xratu-_ ‘wisdom’, Khotanese Saka _gratä_ ‘instruction, advice’ < *_xrata-_ (replacing _xratu-_).

Khalaśamuśa < *_Xāra-śāma-ča-_ ‘of shining face’, Khotanese Saka *_khāra-_ ‘in _khārāva-_ ‘shining’), _śśāman-_ ‘face’.

Muki < *_Mava-ka-_ ‘tiger, hero’, Khotanese Saka _mauya-_, _muyi_ ‘tiger’.

The linguistic evidence for the Sakas of Malwa (Ujjayinī) is again modest:

Kṣaharāta < *_xšaθra-pati-_ ‘lord of the country’.

Ysamotika < *_Zama-pati-ka-_ ‘landlord’, Khotanese Saka_ysama-_ ‘earth’.

Dāmaysada < **Dāmi-zāta-* ‘begotten by the Creator’, Avestan *dāmay-* ‘Creator’,Khotanese Saka *ysāta-* ‘born’.

Nahapāna ‘protector of the clan’, Khotanese Saka **nāha-* ‘navel’ (genitive singular *nehä*), *-pānä* ‘keeper’, *pā-* ‘to protect’.

CaṣṭanaTiastanes (in Greek script) ‘master’, Khotanese Saka *caṣṭeṃ* (< **caṣṭana-*) ‘master as a proper name’.

Uṣavadāta- < **R̥ śva-dāta-* ‘rightly created’, Avestan *ərəšva-* ‘right’, Khotanese Saka *dāta-* ‘placed, established; law’.

Āḍuthuma < **Artava-tauxma-* ‘offspring of a righteous man’, Khotanese Saka *ttīma-* (< **tauxman-*) ‘seed’.

Scanty as it is, this evidence does permit us to form some idea about the language of the Saka groups settled on the territory between Sistan and Malwa. The language of the Sakas of Sistan was apparently influenced by Parthian as the borrowing of the Parthian term *spāε a* ‘army’ testifies. During the reigns of Azes I, Azilises and Azes II the power and influence of this Saka group extended eastwards as far as Taxila, and there were obviously some linguistic contacts between the Saka groups of Sistan and Gandhāra. Notwithstanding, the differences between them are also apparent. Such terms as *muruṇḍa*, *kṣaharāta*, *hiye*, *veśpasika*, *horamurta*, *horamurṇḍaga*, *caṣṭana*, etc. never appear to the west of Gandhāra.

On the other hand, from the evidence of the names and terms used on the territory of both Gandhāra and Mathura, the close ties between the Saka groups of these two countries are evident. Even though linguistic evidence for the Sakas of Malwa is very limited, it nevertheless becomes clear that they were related to the Saka groups of Gandhāra and Mathura. It follows that even if the four Saka groups of Sistan, Gandhāra, Mathura and Malwa were in contact with each other, they represented two different Saka dialects – the dialect of Sistan and that of Gandhāra, Mathura and Malwa. Established on the basis of names and terms, this division corresponds exactly to the distribution of the titles **rauka-* (in *Sakā raukā)* and *muruṇḍa-* (in *Sakā mrunda*) and probably reflects two waves of Saka immigration, proceeding by two different routes to the south.

Similarly significant is the comparison of Southern Saka vocabulary with northern, Khotanese Saka (S = Sistan, G = Gandhāra, M = Mathura, U = Ujjayinī and Malwa):

	Southern Saka	Khotanese Saka
G	*achia* (**āčayaka-*) 'observant, reverent'	*ācya-vaṃ d*'observant, reverent'
M	*abu* (< **abva-*) 'abundant'	*abvātta* 'abundant'
M	*amaṣa* 'chariot'	*maś-* (< **amaṣya-*) 'chariot'
S	*aya* (< **aza-*) 'leader'	**-aza* (Kharoṣṭhī *-ajha*) 'leader'
M	*ayasi* (< **azazi*) 'lady'	[a]ysāṃ je, eysāja- 'noble girl'
S	*ayiliśa* (< **aziliźa-*) 'commander-in-chief'	–
G	*ara* (< **āra*) 'noble'	*āra* 'worthy, noble'
M	*arṭa* (< **arθya-*) 'pious'	–
U	*āḍu-* (< **artava-*) 'righteous'	–
M	*-uia* 'looking down upon'	*uy-* 'to look down upon'
M	*ulāna* 'high-born'	*ula* 'up'
U	*uṣava-* 'right'	–
M	**-hosta* 'mighty'	*hauvasta* 'powerful'
M	*kam-* (< **kāma-*) 'lust'	–
M	*kalui* (< **kaluka-*) 'noble'	*kala-* 'excellent'
GM	*kusuluka*, *kusulua* (**kuzuluka*) 'energetic'	*kūys-* 'to seek, search'
GMU	*kṣahar-* (**xšahr-*) 'country'	*kṣāra-* 'power, dominion'
GMU	*kṣaharāta-* (< **xšahra-vata-*) 'lord of the country'	–
M	*khara-* (**xāra-*) 'splendid'	*khārāva-* 'shining'
M	*khardaa-* (**xrataka-*) 'wise'	*gratä* (**xrata-*) 'wisdom'
M	*khala-* (**xāla-*) 'splendid'	*khārāva-* 'shining'
G	*-gula* 'progeny'	*-kula* 'progeny'
S	*-gadama* (**kātama-*) 'commander'	–
U	*caṣṭana* 'master'	*caṣṭeṃ* 'master'
M	*-jada* (**zāta-*) 'begotten'	*ysāta-* 'born'
G	*jihoṇika* 'benefactor'	*jeh-*, *jih-*, *jehuña-* 'to heal'
G	[1]*jhaṃ da* (**zāta-*) 'born'	*ysāta-* 'born'
G	[2]*jhaṃ da-* (**zāta-*) 'birth'	*ysā-* (< **ysāta-*) 'birth'
U	*-thuma* (*thūma- < *tauxma-*) 'offspring'	*ttīma-* (< **tūma-* < **tauxma-*) 'seed'
G	*dami-* 'Creator'	–
U	*-dāta* 'created'	*dāta-* 'established'
U	*dāma-* 'Creator'	–
M	*diaka*'supervisor'	*dai-/di-*, *diyāna-* 'to see'
G	*deni-* 'religion'	–
M	*nada* 'leader'	*nada-* 'leader'
G	*nama* (**nāma*) 'name'	*nāma* 'name'
U	*naha-* (**nāha-*) 'navel, clan'	**nāha-* 'navel'
M	*nau-* 'worship'	*nau-da* 'obeisance, worship'
G	*-pa* (< **pavā*) 'protector'	*pā-* 'to protect'
GM	*patika-* 'leader'	*patä*, *patäna* 'before, in front of'
M	*-pallāna -balano* (**valāna-*) 'youth'	*valaka* 'young'
U	*-pāna* 'protector'	*-pānä* 'keeper'; *pā-* 'to protect'
M	*maja* (**māja*) 'delightful'	*māja* 'delightful'

G	*mani* (< **mānya*-) 'delightful'	*mānya* 'delighted'
G	*mava*- 'tiger, hero'	*mauya*- 'tiger'
M	-*masa* 'greatness'	*mase* 'greatness'
M	*muki* (< **mava-ka*-) 'tiger, hero'	*muyi* (< **mavya*-) 'tiger'
GM	*muruṇḍamurṇḍaga* 'lord, king'	*rrund*- 'lord, king'
G	-*murta* (< **mrautā*) 'lord, ruler'	*rautcū* (< **mrauta-ča-una*-) 'commandant, ruler'
G	*moga*, *moa* (< **mavaka*-), 'tiger, hero'	*muyi* (< **mavya*-) 'tiger'
M	*miyika* (< **mayaka*-) 'prosperous'	*ggu-mai* 'at will'
M	*mevaki* (< **mavyaka*-) 'tiger, hero'	*muyi* (< **mavya*-) 'tiger'
U	-*ysada* (< **zāta*-) 'begotten; cf. G -*jada*'	*ysatä* 'born'
U	*ysam*- 'earth'	*ysama*- 'earth'
M	*raj*- (**rāza*-) 'ruling, ruler'	*rraysaa*- 'official title'
S	-*riśa*- (**riźa*-) 'commanding'	*rriś*- 'to desire'
S	-*rauka*- 'lord, ruler'	*rūkya*- 'commander, lord'
G	*liaka* 'youth'	*rya* 'youth'
S	-*liśa* (**liźa*-) 'commanding'	*rris*- 'to desire'
M	-*luda* (**lūda*- < **rauda*-) 'heightening'	*rruv*- 'to grow'
M	-*vula* (< **vara*-) 'ruler, king'	*vara*- 'excellent, string'
GM	*ve*- (< **vaya*- **baga*-) 'lord, god'	*vvūva*- (< **vava*- < **baga*-) 'lord'
M	-*śamu*- (< **śāma*-) 'face'	*śśāman*- 'face'
M	*śuḍ*-/*śoḍ*-'goodness'	*śśäḍe* 'goodness'
S	*śpalagadama* 'commander of army'	–
S	*śpalahora*'commander of army'	–
S	*śpaliriśa*'in command of *army*'	–
G	*ṣada* 'rejoicing, rich'	*tsāta*- 'rich'
GM	-*spasika* 'servant'	*spaśa* 'observer'
M	*haga*- 'forward'	*hā* (< **hāk*) 'forward'
M	*hagāna*- 'leader'	–
M	*hana* (**xana*) 'smiling'	*khan*- 'to laugh, smile'
M	*hayuara* 'helper, companion'	–
G	*hiye* 'master'	*hiye* 'master'
GM	[1]*hora*- 'gift'	*hora*-, *haura*- 'gift'
SM	[2]*hora*- 'lord, commander'	*haura*- 'commander'
M	*horaka* 'lord of gifts'	*haurāka* 'donor, giving'
M	*horamurṇḍaga* 'lord of gifts'	–
G	*horamurta* 'lord of gifts'	–
M	-*hola* 'gift'	*hora*- 'gift'

On the basis of this comparison it becomes clear that the Saka groups of Sistan, Gandhāra, Mathura and Malwa on the one hand, and the population of Khotan (and Tumšuq) on the other hand, spoke closely related dialects of the same language. The Southern Sakas preserved the common Saka social terminology well: *thuma* 'offspring', *hora* 'lord', *-gula* 'progeny', *nāha* 'clan', *nada* 'leader', **azazi* 'lady', *hiye* 'lord', *rāza* 'ruler', *caṣṭana* 'master', *kalui* 'noble', *aza* 'leader', *muruṇḍa* 'lord, king', *rauka-* 'lord, ruler', *murta* 'lord', *xšahr* 'country' and *ve-*'lord, god'. It is a remarkable fact that they also maintained the ancient religious vocabulary as, for example, *arṭa* 'pious', *āḍu* 'righteous', *uṣava* 'right', *dami* 'Creator', *den* 'religion', *ve* 'god', which was replaced by Buddhist terminology in Khotanese Saka. Other archaic features in Gandhāra and Mathura Saka may be the retaining of initial *mr-* in contrast to the Saka dialects of Sistan and Khotan where initial *m* of this consonant cluster disappeared as well as the development *-aux-* > *-ū-*, while in Khotanese Saka a further shift *ū* > *ī* took place.

However, there are also some innovations in sound system and vocabulary of the Southern Saka dialects. They borrowed some important terms like *spala* 'army', *spasa* 'servant' and *śada* 'happy' from Parthian or Bactrian and created a new terminology to denote the ruling aristocracy as, for example, *kṣ aharāta*, *hayuara*, *horaka*, *horamurta*, *horamurṇḍaga*, *aziliśa*, *spalahora*, *spalagadama*, *spaliriśa*. A further striking phenomenon is the phonetic change *r* > *l* which often occurs (cf. *-luda liaka -liśa - hola khala-*, *-vula*). Perhaps the strengthening of the role of *l* in the phonemic system of Southern Saka is due to the influence of Bactrian and Indian languages in which the phoneme *l* was rather frequent. Thus, however scanty they may be, the linguistic remains of the Sakas settled in Sistan, Gandhāra, Mathura and Malwa furnish valuable information about the Southern Saka dialects and their relations to Khotanese Saka.

17

LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE IN THE KUSHAN EMPIRE*

J. Harmatta

Contents

An unknown language in an unknown script

Since 1954 a striking series of linguistic documents written in an unknown language and in an unknown script have come to light in the territory of Central Asia of the Graeco-Bactrian and the Kushan periods. The following documents are known:

1. *Surkh Kotal*, three lines, written with black ink on a small fragment of stone.
2. *Dasht-i Nawur*, stone inscription, nine lines.
3. *Khalchayan*, one inscription on a potsherd, another on a tile.
4. *Kara-tepe*, three fragmentary inscriptions on potsherds.
5. *Ay Khanum*, inscription on a silver ingot.
6. *Issîk* (50 km to the east of Alma Ata), inscription on a silver cup.

* See Map 4.

7. *Khatîn-Rabat* (in southern Tajikistan), fragmentary inscription on a potsherd.
8. *Tekkuz-tepe* (in southern Tajikistan), inscription on a potsherd, unpublished.
9. *Old Merv*, inscription (s?) on a potsherd, unpublished.
10. *Fayaz-tepe* (near Termez), several inscriptions on earthenware, unpublished.
11. *Kafirnigan-tepe* (40 km to the south of Dushanbe), fragment of a wall inscription (?), unpublished.

Consequently, the spread of this unknown script and language covers a vast territory from Alma Ata up to Merv, Dasht-i Nawur and Ay Khanum.

There have been speculations about the character and ethnic background of the script, but only one suggestion really deserves consideration – the theory that the script goes back to the Kharoṣṭhī alphabet and the language written in this script may be a Saka dialect, perhaps also spoken by the Kushans. In fact, in spite of the similarity of several letters to the characters of the Orkhon–Yenisey Türk runic script, it is clear that the number and shape of the letters, the system of vowel mātrās and the presence of compound akṣaras prove without any doubt the Kharoṣṭhī origin of the alphabet. The coincidence of some akṣaras with runic characters is restricted to the cases where the Aramaic prototypes of both the Kharoṣṭhī and the Sogdian letters (the latter serving as models for the Türk runic signs) were similar.

If we tentatively substitute the syllabic values of the Kharoṣṭhī alphabet, the resulting text has a Saka character. So one of the two inscriptions from Khalchayan, containing only one compound akṣara, can be read as *lya*. This reading can be interpreted as a personal name and compared to the well-known Saka name *Liaka* (cf. Khotanese Saka*rya* 'young'). The reading of the other inscription from Khalchayan is more uncertain because it is not clear whether it is to be read in the position given by the publication or upside down. In the first case, its reading may be *jha-yi-ka* (i.e. **Zayika*, a name to be compared with the Middle Iranian name *Zīk*); in the second, it can be read as ⌊*ja(ṃ)–*⌋ *mi(ṃ)-pa(ṃ)* (i.e. **Zāmipa*, similarly a name, representing the same type as *Denipa*). Both names could be, however, equally of Saka origin.

One fragment from Kara-tepe can be read as]*śī(ṃ)-mśi*[and connected with Khotanese Saka *śīṃja* 'the thorny jujube' used for preparing juice in Khotan. The other fragment from Kara-tepe may be read as]*nā(ṃ)-sā(ṃ) kṣa*[, i.e.]*nāsā kṣa*[']portion six[' and *nāsā* may be the same word as Khotanese Saka *nasā*- 'portion', while *kṣa*[can be compared to Khotanese Saka *kṣa*, *kṣäṣǎ* 'six'. Nor is the fragmentary text from Khatîn Rabat longer: *e 1*

yo[sa 'whole [is] *1* musk', *e* being equal to Khotanese Saka *ī* (one, whole), and the spelling *yo[sa* representing the same word as Khotanese Saka *yausa* 'musk'.

The texts of the inscriptions from Dasht-i Nawur and Surkh Kotal are rather long and reading them presents great difficulties because of their being poorly preserved. Line 1 of the inscription of Dasht-i Nawur (DN III) can tentatively be read as follows: *sa-⌈li⌉mi paṃ-ja-sa⌈bra⌉-ka-śiṃ mi ma-ste⌈paṃju⌉-sa⌈ha⌉-ḍa* 'The year [is] now 50, Brakaśi [is] now the month, 15 days'. To illustrate the character of the language, we may compare the same text in Khotanese Saka (in Brāhmī orthography) with it:

> Dasht-i Nawur: *sail mi paṃjasa brakaśiṃ mi maste paṃjusa haḍa* Khotanese Saka: *salä mī paṃjsāsä braṃkhaysji mī māstä paṃjsūsa haḍa*.

The similarity is obvious and if the proposed reading of the date proves to be correct, it follows that the Southern Sakas (or the Kushans) had a knowledge of the month names used also in Khotan and of the time reckoning by cycles of sixty years or by another era, different from the one used in the Bactrian inscription (DN I) of Dasht-i Nawur.

The text of lines 2–9 of the inscription DN III runs as follows:

1. *ye rva-da-ti ri a-*[*ja*]*-ti vi(ṃ)-ja-rka ka-⌈tvi-sa⌉* [*ku*]*-ṣa-ṇa*
2. *mi mri pa(ṃ)-ra-mmi-na sta-naṃ pa(ṃ)-ri-vāṃ śi-ḍa va-⌈ri⌉kāṃ hāṃ*
3. *sa gra-vāṃ ti-rma da-bha sa-di pa ka(ṃ)-pi-sa(ṃ) śa-di-ña*
4. *ha-mri(ṃ)-ja kaṃ-⌈ḍ⌉a vaṃ-yi-ñām kaṃ-ju-vāṃ śi-kṣa-śi dha-kaṃ*
5. *jhaṃ-saṃ ka-⌈ḍ⌉a ta-rma pa a-jaṃ naṃ-vāṃ ha-mri-ka sa-ṇa śi-jha*
6. *mri-kaṃ śi kaṃ-⌈ju⌉-vaṃ mi-*[*śta ha-ra*]*-⌈sta⌉ha-mi ha-mi ha-ya-ḍa ja-sta ha-sa*
7. *he-ko mri(ṃ)-ka mi ho-kaṃ jyoṃ pa-pāṃ-sa vāṃ-ta haṃ-mi-ga-śa*
8. *mla ka-ña e-śi haṃ-da-⌈ḍa⌉paṃ-mri pu-⌈ḍa⌉taṃ-ka u-da⌈da-ri ja⌉-rmi⌈ja⌉-sta ja*.

On the basis of the far-reaching agreement of the language of this inscription with Khotanese Saka and with the aid of its Bactrian version (see later) its text can be interpreted in the following way:

1. Behold! [We] King of Kings, the noble, great Katvisa, the Kuṣāṇa,
2. now, here, we order to erect the commanded text for the welfare as heroic words:
3. He [Katvisa] mounted on the mountains, [he] was able to cross the high region. He inspected Kāpiśa.

4. [He] put relief to [his] advancing domestics, moved forward [his] forces,
5. fought a battle, crossed the region, pursued, captured the crushed Sanas [= Avestan *Sāini*-], destroyed [them].
6. Graciously he rested [his] servants, he offe[red] pres[ents] to all of them. He celebrated a feast for the god,
7. being devoted and gracious. Then he held feastings for the officers and the warriors altogether.
8. He ordered to engrave on the rock the favourable report [that] he removed the tax and contribution from [the sanctuary of] the supreme god.

The content of this inscription coincides in all essential details with that of the Bactrian version (discussed below) of the epigraphic monument at Dasht-i Nawur. However, a remarkable phenomenon is that the relation of this inscription is much more detailed than the Bactrian text. Obviously, the most important version of the report about the campaign led by Vima Kadphises to the region of Dasht-i Nawur was represented precisely by this text. From the repeated mentions of the domestics, their rewards, and the festive banquet given in honour of the officers and warriors, it follows that this was the language spoken and understood in the royal court of Vima Kadphises and among his retinue and army, whether this was some Saka dialect adopted by the Kushans or the original language of the Kushans themselves. The central position and the detailed text of this inscription clearly speak in favour of the latter assumption.

Another interesting document, written in the same language and with the same script, is represented by the inscription from Surkh Kotal. The character of the record is striking. It was written in black ink on a stone fragment, measuring 22.5 × 11 × 4.9 cm. This fact excludes the possibility of an official document and renders the assumption of an occasional record probable. The text of the inscription, also coming very likely from the Kushan age, can tentatively be read as follows:

1. *hi-yo e-se ho ta-na*: *mva-ra ha-mu-di a-ja hi-rya pa-śi da-pa va-rya*
2. *ka-vā-gyo ja-rya da-ja ho-la cha-ḍa gyo-rmi va-gyo dha-na cha-ka mo-śa ja-na*
3. *va-hī da-hu daṃ-na*.

Contrary to the inscription of Dasht-i Nawur, here we have no support for the understanding of this text. In spite of this apparent difficulty, however, the interpretation is not impossible because some terms and phrases can clearly be identified again with the aid of Khotanese Saka. Thus, the inscription can be interpreted in the following way:

1. The lord gives orders so: The procedure happened. It is possible to release the non-perished wealth: the mantle,
2. the coat of mail, the armour, the flamc[-coloured] covering, the miler excellent race-horse, the grain, the goat will you quickly carry away!
3. The house is given to the man [or to Dahu].

This text obviously represents a report on a judgement about the division of property either in the case of divorce or by way of inheritance: one party obtained the movable wealth (the things enumerated in the report), the other one kept the immovable property (the house). This report was apparently sent by a person who belonged to the retinue of the 'lord' exercising the jurisdiction and who was personally acquainted with at least one of the parties. The use of the stone fragment for the purpose of this information is probably due to the lack of other writing materials in Surkh Kotal at that time.

All the records written in this variant of Kharoṣṭhī script and Saka language discussed so far date back to the Kushan age. Two inscriptions of this type, however, represent an earlier period. The inscription of Ay Khanum, engraved on a silver ingot, comes probably from the second half of the second century B.C., while the inscribed silver cup from Issîk was dated to the sixth-fourth centuries B.C. Nevertheless, there can be hardly any doubt that the latter dating is too early. Taking into consideration the fact that the inscription from Issîk cannot be separated from other inscriptions of this type and that it clearly presents the characteristics of the Kharoṣṭhī script, it cannot be dated before the second half or the end of the third century B.C. In any case, these two inscriptions present more archaic, more angular, simpler letter forms than the other.

Even though some of these features may be ascribed to the writing technique (engraving), they still indicate an earlier date.

The text of the silver ingot from Ay Khanum can be read as follows:

a-l-za-to mi-pa-zaṃ-na pa-ya a-mi-zaṃ-na pe | *pa-ya-di-na* | [. . .

Silver: smelt sort, mixed, greenish [?] | examined | [weight . . .

The text is probably incomplete as the end of the record is broken off.

The term *alzato* (silver) exactly coincides with Khotanese Saka*āljsata*- (silver) but except *amizaṃna* (< Old Iranian **āmaiĉa-na*-, Middle Persian *āmēxtan* 'to mix' all words or stems also occur in Khotanese Saka.

The inscription on the silver cup from Issîk can tentatively be transcribed again in the following way:

1. *za(ṃ)-ri ko-la (ṃ) mi(ṃ)-vaṃ vaṃ-va pa-zaṃ pa-na de-ka mi(ṃ)-ri-to* The vessel should hold wine of grapes, added cooked food, so much, to the mortal,

2. *ña-ka mi pa-zaṃ vaṃ-va va-za(ṃ)-na vaṃ*
 then added cooked fresh butter on.

The vocabulary of this inscription, too, has quite exact parallels in Khotanese Saka: *za(ṃ)ri* 'vessel' ∼ Khotanese Saka *jsarā* 'receptacle', *kola* 'grapes' ∼ Khotanese Saka *kūra* 'grapes', Vedic *kola* 'jujube', *mi(ṃ)va-* 'wine' ∼ Khotanese Saka *meva*, *māya-* 'intoxicant drink', *vaṃva* 'added' (< **ava-nava-*) ∼ Khotanese Saka *puṇvāña-* 'to be inserted' (< **pati-nava-nya-*), *pazaṃ* 'cooked' ∼ Khotanese Saka *pajs-* 'to cook', *pa* < *ṃ* > *na* 'food' ∼ Khotanese Saka *paṃna-* 'food', *deka* 'so much' ∼ Khotanese Saka *deka* 'so much', *mi(ṃ)rita* 'mortal' (< **mṛy-ata-*) ∼ Khotanese Saka *mär-* (< **mṛya-*) 'to die', *ñaka* 'fresh butter' ∼ Khotanese Saka *nīyaka-* 'fresh butter', *mi* 'then, now' ∼ Khotanese Saka *mi* 'now, then', *vaz-* 'to hold' ∼ Khotanese Saka *vaj-/vāj-* 'to hold', *va(ṃ)* 'to, on, for' ∼ Khotanese Saka *va* 'for'.

On the basis of these texts and of the close parallels between them and Khotanese Saka linguistic data, it is easy to recognize the close relationship of the two languages. In spite of some uncertainties in the reading and interpretation of these texts, written in a variant of the Kharoṣṭhī script, there can be hardly any doubt about the essential features of their language. They clearly represent a language of Saka type with some peculiar features. The question remains, however, whether the language of these texts was a Southern Saka dialect also adopted for their chancelleries by the Kushans or whether it represents the original language of the Kushans, which was closely related to the Saka dialects.

The Bactrian language in Greek script

The importance of Hellenism in Central Asia may be best illustrated by the fact that the Greek alphabet was adopted to write the Bactrian language. Earlier, it was generally assumed that Bactrian literacy came into existence under the Kushan king Kanishka I, because it was under his rule that the Kushan mints struck coins with partly Greek and partly Bactrian legends, written using Greek characters. In 1967, however, a trilingual inscription of Vima Kadphises was discovered at Dasht-i Nawur, one version of which was written in the Bactrian language using the Greek alphabet. It thus became clear that Bactrian literacy dates back to the time of Vima Kadphises or perhaps even earlier.

The Greek alphabet of Bactria was adapted with its contemporary sound values to the phonetic system of Bactrian. Thus, the Greek spellings *ει* and *ου* were used to denote Bactrian *ī* and *ū* respectively. The differences between the Greek and Bactrian phonetic

systems, however, necessitated some changes in the sound values of the Greek letters, for example sigma (σ, ς) denoted beside *s* also *ć* and Greek zeta (ζ) had the sound values *z* and *j*. In Bactrian Greek the consonant cluster *ks* became assimilated to *ss*, *s*. Consequently, the Greek letter xi (ξ) was not suitable to represent Bactrian *xš*. Therefore, the consonant khi (χ) and the newly created *ṣ* (Þ) were introduced to denote this Bactrian consonant cluster. A striking peculiarity of the Bactrian alphabet is the new sign Þ for Bactrian *ṣ* and the use of Greek upsilon (υ) for Bactrian *h*.

Bactrian writing was widely used throughout the Kushan Empire both for official purposes and for everyday life. Accordingly, there are several types of records in Bactrian writing: (a) stone inscriptions; (b) wall inscriptions; (c) inscriptions on objects; (d) coin legends; and (e) seal inscriptions. The most important sites of Bactrian inscriptions are: (a) Surkh Kotal with six stone inscriptions; (b) Kara-tepe with inscriptions on potsherds (the short wall inscriptions, numbering about 100, were scratched on the corridor walls by visitors to the sanctuary during the Sasanian age; (c) Dasht-i Nawur with two stone inscriptions; (d) Dilberjin with two stone inscriptions from the Kushan period (some wall inscriptions and ostraca are of post-Kushan date); and (e) Ayrtam with one stone inscription.

According to the evidence of the Bactrian inscriptions known so far, it was the Kushan king Vima Kadphises who first had monumental rock or stone inscriptions prepared. Of his inscriptions, that of Dasht-i Nawur (DN I) seems to be the earliest. Consisting of thirteen lines containing 246 letters, the inscription was engraved on a rock at a height of 4, 320 m in the mountains. Its text can be read and interpreted in the following way:

1. ΣΟΘ Γορπιαιου ιε
   [Era-year] 279, 15th [day of the month] Gorpiaios.

2. Þαονανο Þαο ι αζαδο
   King of Kings, the noble,

3. οαζορϰο Οοημο Ταϰπισο
   great Ooemo Takpiso,

4. ϰοÞανο ι μανοζινιγο ι λαδο-
   the Kuṣāṇa protégé of the moon [god], the right-

5. γο ι βαγο οζολαδο ειδο
   cous, the Majesty had this prepared,

6. χοζογαργο αβο ζαχφαο
   he, the benefactor for the welfare.

7. Οοημο Þαο ασο Ανδηζο ατο
   King Ooemo came both here from
8. μαλο αγαδο ατηο Σανιγε
   Andezo and the Sanigos
9. νομορδανδο οδο μαλο
   were destroyed by him. And here
10. φρομαδο Ανδηζο πορσο
    he ordered: 'Be the tax paid by Andezo
11. βοοηιο χιβδο αβο βαγανο
    its own for the sanctuary
12. οδο ιαζαδο ι χαρισαρο αβο αμειγο
    and the warlike divinity for ever!'
13. ατο οτανο μολο χοανδο
    For that because he was called by them here.

As can be seen, the content of the Bactrian inscription (DN I) agrees with the Kushan version (DN III) discussed above in all essential points. The epigraphic record was prepared to commemorate the crossing of the high mountains and the victory won by Vima Kadphises when he came from Andezo (Qunduz) over the Sāinis (*Sanige* in the Bactrian text, *Saṇa* in the Kushan version) dwelling in the region. The date of the inscription is '[Year] 279, 15th [day of the month] Gorpiaios'. Very likely, the era concerned is the so-called Graeco-Bactrian or Eucratides era, beginning with the accession of Eucratides about 170 B.C. The last epigraphic record of Vima Kadphises dating from the same era is the unfinished inscription of Surkh Kotal (discussed below) from Year 299. Obviously, this inscription was left unfinished because of the death of Vima, so that Year 299 may correspond to the year before the accession of Kanishka. Accordingly, the date of DH I would approximately correspond to a day in September A.D. 113 and the accession of Eucratides would be in 166 B.C.

The date of the Kushan inscription of Dasht-i Nawur (DN III) is consisttent with this: like Gorpiaios, *Brakaśi* is an autumn month and if Year 50 represents the fiftieth year of a sixty-year cycle, it would fall in A.D. 113 according to the Chinese sixty-year cycle time-reckoning and in A.D. 117 according to the Indian one. The former conversion exactly corresponds with the date of the Bactrian inscription DN I. Hence, the Kushans probably became acquainted with the Chinese sixty-year cycle while they were still in their ancient home in Gansu.

The other Bactrian inscription of Dasht-i Nawur is hardly legible and is still to be deciphered, but all five inscriptions of this site were probably engraved at the same time and can be ascribed to Vima Kadphises.

At the Dilberjin site several epigraphic fragments were found which belong to two inscriptions. Their texts are rather fragmentary: in inscription 1 only one complete word has been preserved, while in inscription 2 no complete sentence can be found. In spite of the fragmentary state of both inscriptions, their texts can tentatively be restored and their contents roughly understood. The name of Vima can probably be recognized in both records.

Consisting of at least ten lines and of 200–220 letters, the tentatively restored text of inscription D 1 runs as follows:

1. [.......................]
   [Era-year ..., ... [day of month] ...]

2. [Þαονανο Þαο ι αζαδο]
   [King of Kings, the noble,]

3. [οαζορϰο Οοη]⌈μο⌉ [Ταϰπισο]
   [great Ooe]mo [Takpiso,]

4. [ϰοÞονο ι] λαδε[ιγο ι βαγο]
   [the Kuṣāṇa, the] right[eous, the Lord]

5. [ειδο πιδογαρο] σαγδο [αβο ΟηÞο]
   [had this image] prepared [to Oeṣo]

6. οδο φρομαδο ι]θα α⌈τ⌉[ανο ϰιδο]
   [and he ordered] thus that [by them who]

7. [αβο μαλι]ζι βαγα[νοβιδο οδο]
   is in the fort]ress pries[t and]

8. [ϰιδο μαλο] ναχσε⌈ι⌉[ροβιδο βαγο]
   [who is here master of] the hunt [, care]

9. [λαγγο πιδορι]⌈χσ⌉ηο οδ[ο πορooαρ]
   [should be] taken [for the sanctuary] and

10. [σηο πιδο ι β]⌈ο⌉ργ⌈ο⌉ ο[δο ι λ ηνο]
    [the cult should be performed according to the] rite [and the religion].

The inscription was discovered in the sanctuary lying in the north-eastern corner of the Dilberjin fortress and decorated with a wall-painting representing Śiva and Parvatī. The wall-painting was prepared in the reign of Vima Kadphises.

The other inscription from Dilberjin consists of at least twenty-four lines comprising about fifty letters each. Thus, it must have had altogether about 1,200 letters and represented the most considerable Bactrian epigraphic text known so far. Unfortunately, in the three fragments discovered only 442 letters, that is, about a third of the original text, have been preserved. Happily, important terms such as *φαρο*, *αβ*[ο], *σαδ*[ο], *αβο ι ωραο*[*νο*] and [*ωρα*]*ονο μο ι αβγο* 'abundant water', 'well', 'waterflow' clearly reveal the main topics of the inscription: the water supply of the Dilberjin stronghold and sanctuary. It seems that the stronghold was at first provided with water from a source lying outside the walls where later a sardoba was built. When the water of the source began to fail, a well was dug in the bastion flanking the gate and the use of the water was strictly regulated. These and other measures were apparently taken by order of King Vima Kadphises. In view of the rather fragmentary state of the inscription, its text can only partly and tentatively be restored.

The conjecturally completed text of the inscription runs as follows:

1. [*χ*Þ*ονο* . . . .*βαγο* Þ*αονανο* Þ*αο ι αζαδο οαζορϰο*] [Era-year . . . , . . . [day of the month] . . . King of Kings, the noble, great]

2. ⸢*Οοη*⸣*μο* ⸢*Τα* ⸣[*ϰπισο ϰο*Þ*ανο ι μαυοζινιγο ι λαδογο ειδο βαγολαγγο*] ⸢Ooe⸣m⸢o Ta⸣[kpiso, the Kuṣāṇ, protégé of the moon [god], the lord dedicated this sanctuary]

3. *αβο Οη*Þ*ο* [*ι βορζαοανδο ιαζαδο* . . . .] to Oēṣo, [the exalted divinity . . . .]

4. *οισπα ανα*[*γρο* . . . .] the eter[nal lord of] the universe [. . . . .]

5. *οισπο σα*[*σταρο λαδο τα ϰαλδο μαλιζο φρογιρδο ταδηιο ϰαρανο ο*] Ma[ster of] all beings. [At that time, when the fortress was completed, there was no pure]

6. *δο φαρο αβ*[*ο νιστο χοτο ταδι ασο μαλιζο αβαβγο φροχορτο Οη*Þ-] and abundant water [in it to drink. Then, the god Oëṣo wanted to leave the waterless fortress.]

7. *ο βαγο σι*⸢*δι αβ*⸣[*ο βαγολαγγο ασο ανο χα*]*νο α*[*βο οαστσηιο ταδι ασο*] In order [to conduct the water from the old spr]ing to [the sanctuary, then]

8. ⸢*Οζην*⸣*η* Þ*αορο ο*[*αρζιγε οδο ϰιρωγε οαστι*]*νδο ϰα*[*λδι μο* Þ*αο Οοημο*] [from] the land Ujjayinī w[orkers and artisans] were led here. When [King Ooēmo]

9. [*Τοχ*]⸢*μο*⸣*δανε α*[*βαρμαγγο μαλο ζιδο ταδ*]*ηο σαδ*[*ο μο ανδαρο φροοαρο*] [sent Tox]modane as su[perintendent here, then] he [had] a well [dug in the bastion]

10. [ϰανδο] οδο ζ[ιδο μο ωραονο ι αβγο ασο] ανο χ[ανο αβο μαλιζο ιθα ατι and [he had the running water] con[ducted from the old spring to the fortress so that]

11. [αβο μαλιζο ϰαρανο οδο φαρο αβο μα γαοηιο οδο ταδι] ⸢Οη⸣Þο βαγο] [the abundant and pure water should not be missing in the fortress and then the god] Oē[ṣo should]

12. [ασο βαγολαγγο μα φροχοαþηιο οδο ϰαλδι ειρο μα πα]⸢δη⸣ο α[τι ϰαρα-] [not want to leave the sanctuary and even when the waterflow] would [not be stream]ing, [then from the well pure]

13. [νο οδο φαρο αβο ασο σαδο αβο μαλιζο βοοηι]ο ωλδα ατι φραρ[αονο] [and abundant water shall be for the sanctuary] there. But the right[eous]

14. [Þαο Οοημο ωζανδο σιδι ϰαρανο αβο] ⸢ο⸣βοδραγγα πιδο ανο χ[ανο ταδ-] [King Ooēmo learned that the pure water] is scanty in the old sp[ring. Therefore,]

15. [ηιο Λιια]⸢γο⸣ [μα]⸢λο⸣ α[βαρμαγ]γο λαδο ταδι αγδο αβαρ[μανδο αβο σαδο] he appointed [Liia]go to su[perintend]ent [he]re. He received the supervisory [authority over the well]

16. [οδο χανο]⸢ο⸣τηο ι βρηοαρο βοε σι ειρο οαρ ηλι ωο⸢αρρ⸣[ονδηιο ταδι λ-] [and the spring so] that it should be his decision that the domestics of the fortress [should] cover the drinking water.

17. [αδο ασιδ]ι ιθα σι ειο μανο Κοβειρηο Λιιαγο αλο [πιδοριχσηιο ατι Þα-] [Then it was also ordered] so that Liiago should continually [take care] for the Kuberean house. [Then King]

18. [ο Οοημ]ο λαοδηο ι αλογδα λαδο σιδι με ασο ναζιδο [μα αλο βοοηιο] [Ooēm]o gave the verbal instruction that ‘From my possessions water-conduit [never should be made!] Because otherwise

19. [ωρα]ονο μο ι αβγο ταδι μα αλο ειμο ανο αβο ι ωραο⸢ν⸣ο [ατι βαγανοβι-] this never will be a water-flow!’ [Then to priest]

20. [δο Τ]οχμοδανι λαδο οτι ειμο χοαδηο νε χιδι αβα⸢ρ⸣[μαγγο οδο πιδορ] [T] oxmodani was appointed. Thus it is our king who exercises the super[vision and] should [take care] of us.

21. [ιχσ]ηο ταδι ι μανο νινδιρατο ασιδι ιθα αγδινδι φρη⸢σ⸣[ε αταvο λαÞν-] Then the house was assigned and at that they obtained the duties [so that they pres[ented

22. [ο λα]δο ϰαλδι αβο μο φιγαγγο Þαο Οο[ημ]ο οατηιο [ϰιδι αβαρμανδο] [a gift] when King Ooēmo turns to the master [of the merchants?]

23. [ιθα] αγδο ατανο νοπαχτε αβο ναμω σι α[β][ο] φροζα[μο οδο φροÞογιρδο] [who] received [the privilege so] that the duties of them arc pledged for the cult which [should be] to the end of time and eternity.

24. [βοε] οτ[ι βο]οηιο ΟηÞο οορο οισποοανανο ϰιδ[ι] μο χ[οαδηο νε] Then be the chosen of Oēṣo, who is [our] k[ing], victorious over all!

In spite of its fragmentary state, the Bactrian inscription D2 of Dilberjin gives us an interesting insight into the religious policy and the organizational work of Vima Kadphises. The propagation of the Śiva cult at Dilberjin and elsewhere presupposes the conquest of the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent by Vima, and this might have happened soon after his accession to the throne. Similarly, the crossing of Mount Qarabayu rising to a height of 4,500 m and the victory over the Sāinis as well as the preparation of the inscriptions at Dasht-i Nawur could only take place after the campaign he had led into the Indian subcontinent. The crossing of the high mountains is commemorated on his gold coins with Śiva and Nandi on their reverse, that is, the event was preceded by the spread and the propagation of the Śiva cult in Bactria. Thus, the building activity of Vima Kadphises at Dilberjin and the preparation of inscriptions D1 and D2 can be dated to the period between A.D. 110 and 120.

It seems that the religious policy of Vima underwent some modification towards the end of his reign. According to the testimony of the so-called unfinished inscription from Surkh Kotal (SK 2) he also extended his building activity to that region but apparently his intention was to build a sanctuary for a Bactrian or Kushan deity there. The text of the unfinished inscription from Surkh Kotal can be read in the following way:

> χÞονο σχθ διου [θ Þαο]νανο Þαο [Οοη]μο Τ[αχ]πισο [β]αγο [ϰ]οÞονο λρου ν[ογονδο μαλο]
> Era-year 299, on the 9th [day] of [month] Dios. King of Kings Ooēmo Takpiso, the Majesty, the Kuṣāṇa, had the canal d[ug here].

Very likely, Vima Kadphises died after the completion of the canal and before the finishing of the inscription. Thus, he assured the water supply for the building operations which were probably continued by his successor Kanishka with out interruption. Therefore, the inscription witnessing the building activity of Vima Kadphises at Surkh Kotal was never finished.

None of the Bactrian inscriptions set up during the reign of Kanishka (Years 1–23 of the Kanishka era = A.D. 134–56) was preserved completely. At Surkh Kotal, the monumental

wall inscription (SK 1) must have been prepared at the time of the first Great Kushan king. Unfortunately, however, only one fifth of the whole inscription (124 letters altogether) was preserved.

But the fragments permit us to form an idea about the contents of this important Bactrian record, which might originally have been composed of some 700 letters.

At the beginning of the inscription, the names and titles of the Kushan king were probably mentioned:

]βαγ[ο Þαονανο Þ]αο οβ[οσαρο ΚανηÞχο…]
the lord, Ki[ng of Kings], the mi[ghty Kaneṣko …] (Fragment 1 + b)

The context is not clear; perhaps the passage can be restored in the following way: 'The lord, Ki[ng of Kings], the mi[ghty Kaneṣko, the Kuṣāṇa, had this stronghold built]'. Then, very likely, a date followed (Fragment k + t + v):

[πιδο ι ι]ωγο [χÞον]ο T[……………] ειλο α[γαδο…]
[in the] first [era ye]ar T [an officer of the king] c[ame] here.

Apparently, the next section of the inscription described the building of the stronghold (Fragment m + c + g + a):

οτη[ιο ειδο μαλιζο οδο βαγολαγγο πιδ]ο σαβ[αρο] σαρλ[ο] ανδι[Þτο]
Then [this stronghold and the sanctuary] were built by him in four years.

It seems that further building operations were mentioned in the following passage (Fragment p + w + aa + u + s + y + q + n + j + x + f + r):

[οδο ϰ]εδο ι μ[αλιζ]ο φρ[ογιρδο ταδηιο ειιο μο μα]Þτο [οδο] παγ[δο ι ω]λε σ[αγωγι ϰιρδο οτηιο πιδο ασαγγε λρουο υαρο]υγο ο[ιλιρδο ιθα ατηιο ϰαρ]ανο αβο [πιδο λρου]ο αβο [βαγανο νοÞα]λμ[ο φροοα]στο [ατηιο βαγολαγγο π]ορο- [γατο]

[And] when the st[rongho]ld was com[pleted, then this falçade [and] the stairs l[eading th]ere [were built by him. Moreover, the canal was wh]olly bu[ttressed with stones so that p]ure water was [provid]ed by [him in the can]al for the ab]ode of the gods. Thus he] took care of the sanctuary].

The last passage of the inscription obviously summarized the activity of the royal officer or of his attendants and gave information about the preparation of the record. (The end of the inscription was preserved *in situ*):

[οτο ειιο μο μαλιζο οδο λρουο So-and-So ϰιρδο πιδο ι χοαδηο φρομανο οτο So-and-So] νοβιχτο μο μαÞτο ουβε μο παγδο ι ωλε σαγωγι

[Moreover, this stronghold and the canal were built by So-and-So by the order of the king]. Then So-and-So inscribed the façade and the stairs leading there.

Thus, on the basis of the preserved fragments about three-fifths of the inscription (altogether about 400 letters) can be restored, while Fragments d, e, h, i, o, z = 23 letters were



FIG. 1. Bactrian inscription SKM from Surkh Kotal.

not used for the restoration. The missing passages, consisting of some 270 letters, might have mentioned the preparatory work and earlier building operations of Vima Kadphises and perhaps the intended purpose of the stronghold and the consecration of the sanctuary.

The third inscription of Surkh Kotal (SK 4) was prepared in three versions (SK 4A, SK 4B and SK 4M; see Fig. 1) shortly after Year 31 of the Kanishka era, probably under the joint rule of the Kushan kings Vāsishka, Kanishka II and Huvishka, as Huvishka is already mentioned in Year 28 of the Kanishka era while the two former kings are jointly attested in the inscription from Kamra dated from Year 30 of the same era.

The three versions of the inscription differ from one another in both language and content. Version A describes the earlier fate of the stronghold and the arrival of Nokonzoko, the *karalrango*, who had a well dug to provide drinking water for the stronghold. Besides this officer, nobody else is mentioned; even the scribe and the mason, preparing the record,

are only indicated by their personal devices (Device 1 and Device 2). The language of the inscription is correct Bactrian.

Version B was prepared by another scribe and mason who are both indicated by Device 3 and Device 4 and also mentioned by name – Liiago and Adego – who can be regarded as Kushans or Sakas on the basis of their names. This version already mentions the name of the architect who dug the well. Apart from this, the text of Version B coincides with that of Version A. From a linguistic viewpoint, however, there is an important difference. In Version B, some verbal forms, the particles, the relative pronouns and some nouns terminate in *-i* instead of *-o*. This striking phenomenon cannot be explained by orthographic variation or instability because it only occurs in one and the same Version B, while Version A and Version M offer no instances of it. In view of the fact that the scribe and mason of Version B were probably of Kushan or Saka origin and in their language the outcome of Old Iranian *-ah* was *-i* instead of *-o* in Bactrian, this linguistic feature of SK 4B can probably be regarded as the interference of the Kushan or Saka language. If, therefore, the term Kush-ano-Bactrian or Sako-Bactrian had a real linguistic background, it could best be applied to the language of the inscription SK 4B.

The reason for the preparation of Version B can only have been the lack of any reference in Version A to the architect and to the order of the king by which he had the well dug. However, it seems that further essential building operations were executed later on. Another architect, Xirgomano by name, had the lower façade of the sanctuary built. To commemorate this event, the scribe of Version A, indicated by Device 2, and a third mason represented by Device 5, were again commissioned to prepare a new inscription – Version M. They copied the text of Version A but added two passages, one mentioning the building of the façade by Xirgomano, the other indicating the names of the scribe and mason.

The text of SK 4 (A, B, M) runs:

1. (M) *ειδο μαλιζο μο* Κ*ανη*Þϰο Ο*ανινδο βαγολαγγο σιδο* [B: *σιδι*] *ι βαγο* Þ*αο* [B: Þ*αα̣υυ̣ο*] Κ*ανη*Þϰ*ι* [B: Κ*ανη*Þϰϰ̣Þϰ*ι*] *ναμοβαργο* ϰ*ιρδο* [B: ϰ*ιρδι*].
   This stronghold is the 'Kancṣko' Oanindo sanctuary which the lord king made the namebearer of Kaneṣko.

2. *ταδιοο* ϰ*εδο* [A: ϰ*ιδο*, B: ϰ*εδι*] *φορδαμσο μαλιζο φρογιρδο ταδηιο μανδαρο αβο νιστο* [B: *νιστι*] *χοτο ασιδο* [B: *ασιδι*] *μαλιζο* [B: *μαλιζα*] *αβαβγο σταδο*. *οδο* ϰ*αλδο ασο λρουο* [B: *λρου*] *μινανο ι ειρο σταδο*, *ταδο* [B: *ταδι*] *ι βαγε ασο ι νο*Þ*αλμο* [B: *ια νι*Þ*αλμο*] *φροχορτινδο* [B: *φροχορτινδι*] *ταδο αβο* Λ*ραφο οαοτινδο* [B: *οαστινδδ̣*]*ιι̣*] *αβο* Α*νδηζο οτο* [B: *οτι*] *μαλιζο πιδοριγδο* [B: *πιδοριγδι*].

At that time when the stronghold was first completed, then its inner water to drink was missing, therefore the stronghold was without water. And when the water-flow disappeared from the canal, then the gods wished themselves away from the abode. Then they were led to Lrafo, [namely] to Andēzo. Afterwards the stronghold became abandoned.

3. *τα ϰαλδο* [B: *ϰαλδι*] Νο*ϰ*ον*ζ*ο*ϰ*ο [B: Νο*ϰ*ον*ζιϰ*ο] *ι ϰαραλραγγ*ο *ι φρει χ*οαδηαα̣γο *ϰ*ιδο [B: *πιδδ̣ι̣ φρειστ*αρο *αβ*ο Þαο *ι* [A: Þ*αυ*ο] *βαγ*οπουρο [B: *βαγ*οποορο] *ιλ*ο [B: *αλι*] *ι χ*ο*β*οσαρο *ι* Þ*ιζ*ογαργο [B: Þ*ιζ*ογαργε] *ι αλ*οÞ*χαλ*ο [A: *αλαχ*Þαλο] *ϰ*ιδο [B: *ϰϰ̣ιδι*] *φαρ*ο οισποανο *μ*ο οαδο *βαργαν*ο *ωσ*ογδο*μαγ γ*ο*π*ιδο *ι ωγ*ο οδο *υιρσ*ο [A: *ιωγ*ο οδο, B: *ιωγ*ο *υιρσ*ο] *χρ*ονο Ν*εισαν*ο *μα*ο [A: *μαυ*ο] *μαλ*ο *αγαδ*ο *αμ*ο [B: *αβ*ο *μ*ο] *βαγ*ο*λαγγ*ο *ταδηι*ο *μαλιζ*ο πορογατο [B: πορ*γα*[το]]. *ταδηι*ο *ειι*ο [B: *ει*ο] *σαδ*ο *ϰανδ*ο οτηιο [B: *ατηι*ο] *αβ*ο οζοοαοτο [A: *αζ*οοαστο B: *ζ*οοαστι] οτηιο *πιδ*ο *ασαγγε ιθ*ο [B: *ιθα*] οιλιρδο *αταν*ο *αβ*ο *μαλιζ*ο *φαρ*ο *ϰαραν*ο *αβ*ο *μα γα*οηιο οδο *ϰαλδαν*ο *ασ*ο *λρ*ουο [B: *λρ*ου] *μιναν*ο *ι ειρ*ο *β*οοηιο *ταδαν*ο *ι βαγε* [A: *β*[*αγ*]ο] *ασ*ο *ι* νο*βαλμ*ο [B: *ια νι*Þ*αλμ*ο] *μα φρ*ο*χ*οαÞονδηιο [B: *φρ*ο*χω*Þ*ινδηι*ο] οτανο *μαλιζ*ο *μα πιδ*ο*ριχσηι*ο

Then, when Nokonzoko, the *karalrango*, the king's favourite who is most devoted towards the king, the Son of God, the patron, the benefactor, the merciful as well, who wishes glory, all-winning strength from pure heart, came here to the sanctuary in the 31st Era-year, in the month *Nisān*, then he took care of the stronghold. Then he had a well dug, thus he provided water. Thereafter, he buttressed [the well] with stones so that the fine, pure water should not be missing for the stronghold. And when for them the water-flow would disappear from the canal, even then the gods should not wish themselves away from their abode, thus the stronghold should not become abandoned by them.

4. οτηιο *ασασϰ*ο *μ*ο *σαδ*ο *αχ*Þ*τριγ*ο *ϰιρδ*ο *αλβαργ*ο *ωσταδ*ο *ιθ*ο [AB: *ιθα*] *ατ*ο [B: *ατι*] *πιδειν*ο [B: *πιδεινι*] *σαδ*ο *πιδειν*ο [B: *πιδεινι*] *αχ*Þ*τριγ*ο *υαρ*ουγο [A: *υαρ*ουγο] *μαλιζ*ο *χ*ουζο *π*οροοατο.
Moreover, he appointed an inspector over the well, he placed a helper there, so that a separate [inspector] took good care of the well and a separate inspector of the whole stronghold.

5. οτο *ειι*ο *μ*ο *σαδ*ο οδο *μα*Þτο Χ*ιργ*ο*μαν*ο *ϰιρδ*ο *αμ*ο Βο*ρζ*ο*μιυρ*ο *αμ*ο Κ ο*ζγα*Þ*ϰιπ*ουρο *αμ*ο Α*στιλ*ο*γανσειγι αμ*ο Νο*ϰ*ον*ζιϰι ϰαραλραγγε μαρηγ*ο *πιδ*ο *ι χ*οαδηο *φρ*ο*μαν*ο [A: –, B: οτι̣ *ει*ι̣ο̣ *σαδ*ο Βο*ρζ*ο*μι*ορο *ϰιρδι*, Κ ο*ζγα*Þ*ϰιπ*[ο]*υρ*ο, Υ*αστιλ*ο*γανζειγ*ο, Νο*ϰ*ον*ζιϰι ϰαραλραγγι μαρηγι πιδ*ο

χοαδηο φρομανο]

. Moreover, this well and the façade were made by Xirgomano and Borzomihro, the son of Kozgaṣko, the citizen of Astilogan, the attendant of Nokonzoko, the *karalrango*, by the order of the king. [B: Moreover, this well was made by Borzomioro, son of Kozgaṣko, citizen of Hastilogan, attendant of Nokonziko, the *karalrango*, by the order of the king.]

6. οτο ειιομανο νοβιχτο αμο Μιυραμανο αμο Βορζομιυροπουρο, Device 5, αμιυραμανο, Device 2 [A: Device 1, αμιοραμανο̣, Device 2, B: λιιαγο, Device 3, Αδηγο Device 4].

   Moreover, Eiiomano inscribed [this] together with Mihramano, the son of Borzomihro [Device 5] jointly [Device 2]. (A: Device 1 jointly, Device 2, B: Liiago, Device 3, Adego, Device 4).

In the historical context of inscription SK 4 of Surkh Kotal, the question may be raised: Which of the Kushan kings is mentioned by the modest titles βαγο þαο in this record? According to the testimony of the Kharoṣṭhī inscription from Kamra, in Year 30 of the Kanishka era, it was Vāsishka who bore among others the titles *mahārāja rājatirāja* while his son Kanishka was probably styled only *mahārāja*. Similarly, Huvishka only bore the title *mahārāja* in Brāhmī inscriptions between Years 23 and 40 of the same era. Corresponding with the Brāhmī inscriptions, on the inscription of Ayrtam, written in Bactrian and dated Year 30 of the Kanishka era (see below), he is styled þαο and βαγο þαο which apparently correspond to the title *mahārāja* on the one hand, and coincide with the title βαγο þαο used in inscription SK 4 of Surkh Kotal on the other. Thus in Year 31 of the Kanishka era (A.D. 164) three Kushan kings, namely Vāsishka I with the Indian titles *mahārāja rājatirāja* (∼ Bactrian βαγο þαουανο þαο), Kanishka II bearing the Indian title *mahārāja* (∼ Bactrian βαγο þαο), and Huvishka I with the same Indian title *mahārāja* and with the Bactrian title βαγο þαο, respectively, were ruling. Obviously, the king styled βαγο þαο in inscripion SK 4 of Surkh Kotal could only be either Kanishka II or Huvishka (I). In view of the fact that according to the text of the inscription 'the lord king made [the sanctuary] name-bearer of Kaneṣko', it is perhaps more likely that 'the lord king' was Kanishka II, who was able to revive the cult of Oanindo/Victory in Surkh Kotal with good reason after his victory over the Parthians about A.D. 162, attested by the *Śrīdharmapiṭakanidānasūtra*.

An important inscription in the Bactrian language was discovered in 1979 at Ayrtam, 18 km east of Termez on the northern bank of the Amu Darya. The inscription was engraved on the front side of a square base of a monumental relief representing the deities Farro and Ardoxṣo. Its text runs as follows:

1. [Þα]ο̣ο̣ο̣ι χÞο̣ λ χα[λδ]ι̣ ι α̣[ρδο]χρο φαρρ[ο πιδογαρα] μαλ[ιι] βα[γ]ο Þαο βαγδο οδο ωσταδ[ο]

   King [is] Ooeṣko, the Era-year [is] 30 when the lord king presented and had the Ardoxṣo-Farro image set up here.

2. [τα χ]αλ[δι] φρογι[ρδ]ο μα̣λ̣ι̣ζα οταδο Þοδιλα [.........]ι γανζαβα̣ρ̣α̣αβο βαγ ολαγγο ζιδο ατι

   At that time when the stronghold was completed then Ṣodila [. . . . .] the treasurer was sent to the sanctuary. Thereupon

3. [ειδο πιδ]ογαρα Þδ̤ι̣λα χιρδο <ο> τι ανι <ι> α αβο μαλιζα ωοταδο ατ̣ι̣χ̣α̣λδι ι [α]βο φρολβαρδο

   Ṣodila had this image prepared, then he [is] who had [it] set up in the stronghold. Afterwards when the water moved farther away,

4. [τ]αδι [ι ι αζαδε] οα̣σ̣τ̣ι̣νδο α̣[σ]ο [ι] μ[α]λ[ιζ]α αβαβο ατι <ι> δι οδιλα σα̣δ̣ι νιγανδο ατι

   then the divinities were led away from the waterless stronghold. Just therefore, Ṣodila had a well dug, then

5. Þοδιλα αβο μλζα αβογανδο ριζδι οτι οβει ι ιαζαδε μα̣λ̣ια̣βο βα[γ]ολαγ[γ]ο αβ[α-]

   Ṣodila had a water-conduit dug in the stronghold. Thereupon both divinities returned back here

6. [σ]ν̤ι̣α̤τ̣ινδο οτι ειμο μιιροζαδα ντβιχτο πιδο ια Þοδιλα φρομανα

   to the sanctuary. This was written by Miirozada by the order of Ṣodila.

The Bactrian inscription of Ayrtam allows us an interesting insight into the inner organization and religious policy of the Kushan kingdom. The Kushan gods represented on the coins were for a long time shadowy figures. The situation changed when the sanctuary of Oanindo was discovered at Surkh Kotal, and the sanctuary of Oaxṣo was found at Takht-i Sangin. Now the cult of Farro and Ardoxṣo is firmly attested by the relief and inscription from Ayrtam.

The Bactrian script and language were used for a long time after the Kushan age but only small fragments of Bactrian literary works have been discovered so far. The latest known examples of Bactrian script date from the end of the ninth century A.D. and were found in the Tochi valley in Pakistan.

Sanskrit and Prakrit

The territory of the Kushan Empire included important parts of modern Pakistan and India with a large population speaking Indian languages. Long before the Kushan age two scripts – Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī – and several literary languages – Sanskrit and different Prakrits – came into being and were highly developed in the Indian subcontinent. Of the two scripts, Kharoṣṭhī was used in the north-west, its eastern limit running across the Panjab with only exceptional examples further east, for example, in Mathura. Variants of Brāhmī spread in the other parts of the subcontinent. The language, written in the Kharoṣṭhī script, was the Gāndhārī Prakrit spoken in Gandhāra and adjacent regions; Brāhmī was used for Sanskrit and, except for Gāndhārī, for the other Prakrit languages.

The use of Kharoṣṭhī had already reached Bactria during the time of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. The Graeco-Bactrian kings used Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī Prakrit as well as Greek for their coin inscriptions. This can be explained partly by the fact that the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom included Gandhāra, a territory where Gāndhārī Prakrit and Kharoṣṭhī script were used, partly by their spread towards Central Asia across Bactria. Evidence of such a process can be seen in the coins with the Gāndhārī legend in Kharoṣṭhī:, *Kaviśiye Nag aradevata* (âIJ¡*Kāpisika Nagaradevatā* city-goddess of Kāpiśa). There is also a Kharoṣṭhī inscription on the smoothing knob of a potter from the Graeco-Bactrian level of Bcgram (Kāpiśa): *pu-ña-mi-tra-sa* '[property] of Punyamitra'. The name *Punyamitra* has a clear, Buddhist character and so this inscription attests not only the spread of the Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī Prakrit, but also the appearance of Indian Buddhists in Graeco-Bactria.

Another early trace of Kharoṣṭhī can be seen at Ay Khanum, where on a potsherd a Kharossṭī record came to light: [*sa* x+]I *daṃ* III *dha* III '[stater x+]I *draṃma* III *dbana* III'. It is likely that Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī Prakrit were brought by Indian merchants and artisans to Transoxanian Bactria in the Graeco-Bactrian period if the Kushan script (the 'unknown script', see above) can really be derived from the Kharoṣṭhī alphabet, and if the dating of the inscription from Issîk (see above) to the end of the third century B.C. proves to be correct. In any case, the use of Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī became more and more extensive in the Saka and Indo-Parthian periods. The Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions on the gold ingots of the hoard from Dalverzin-tepe in northern Bactria bear witness to this development.

The reasons for the quick spread of Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī Prakrit in Bactria and Central Asia are easy to see. The first was that literacy was widely spread among both Buddhist monks and Brahmans, and it was much easier to find Indian scribes acquainted with Kharoṣṭhī than experts in other scripts. So Saka and Indo-Parthian and later Kushan administration became based, to a certain extent, on Indian scribes. Then, from the beginning of

the silk trade about 100 B.C., Indian merchants travelled to China across Central Asia and contributed to the spread of Kharoṣṭhī in the Saka and Indo-Parthian kingdoms and later in the Kushan Empire. As a trace of their travels in the western Pamirs, the Kharoṣṭhī inscription of Dayr-Asan, dated to the beginning of the first century B.C., may be mentioned. Last but not least, Buddhism appeared in Central Asia, and Buddhist monks also followed the Silk Route in the tracks of the merchants, did active missionary work, found patrons and established monasteries. The growth of the silk trade, the spread of Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī Prakrit and the propagation of Buddhism reached a peak under the Kushans.

As a result of this development, Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī Prakrit conquered new territories in northern Bactria in the region of Termez, Chilas and Gilgit as well as in Chinese Turkestan. According to Hsüan-tsang, there were ten Buddhist monasteries in the neighbourhood of Termez in the first half of the seventh century A.D. Some of them must have been founded in the Kushan age, and among them the cave monastery of Kara-tepe (excavated during the last twenty years) was the most important. The numerous Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions found there mostly represent records of donors written on earthenware vessels. On the basis of the letter forms, they can be dated to the Kushan period.

The Kharoṣṭhī rock inscriptions from Chilas and Gilgit, discovered as the result of explorations since 1979, can similarly be dated to the Kushan period. They are of three types: (a) records of pious donations (the image of a stupa or the Buddha, etc. carved on the 'Sacred Rock of Hunza'); (b) records of personal names followed by the good-wish formula *subratu* (with *bra* instead of *bhra* like *dra* instead of *dhra* in the Kharoṣṭhī inscription of Kamra; thus < * *su-bhratu* < * *su-bhartu* < Old Indian *su-bharatu* or *su-bharatān* 'So-and-So may be well!'); and (c) personal names. These are of great importance from both the historical and cultural points of view. They bear witness to Saka and Kushan suzerainty in Gilgit, and provide clear evidence of both the penetration of Buddhism and the spread of Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī Prakrit into the northernmost Indus valley.

The third region, that is Chinese Turkestan, was penetrated by Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī Prakrit in the Late Kushan period. The numerous Kharoṣṭhī administrative documents (about 800), written on wood, leather and paper, were found mainly at Niya and Lou-lan. Earlier researchers thought that they were introduced into the administration of the Kingdom of Shan-shan as a result of Kushan rule there. Later, however, it became clear that the Tarim basin had never been subject to the Kushans and the emergence of Kharoṣṭhī script there cannot be explained by that theory. Kushan chronology also makes any such connection impossible because the western part of the Kushan Empire was annexed by the Sasanians in A.D. 234, while Kharoṣṭhī script was introduced into the administration of the Kingdom of Shan-shan about A.D. 245. This can probably be explained by the

assumption that when the Sasanians conquered Balkh, many Indian staff who had worked in the Kushan administration escaped by the Silk Route to the Kingdom of Shan-shan, entered the service of King Tajaka who in about A.D. 245 was reigning there, and played an important role in creating its state organization, introducing Gāndhārī chancellery practice.

Compared with the Kharoṣṭhī script of Gandhāra, the alphabet of the Kharoṣṭhī documents from Niya and Lou-lan has some peculiar features, of which the most striking is the indication of long vowels by a short stroke written below the line at Niya. The same phenomenon can only be observed in the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of Kara-tepe and Fayaz-tepe near Termez. However, the origin of this sign is explained, as its earlier emergence in northern Bactria proves that it was from there that Kharoṣṭhī script spread to Shan-shan by the Silk Route, that is, it did not reach Niya directly from Gandhāra via Gilgit and the Karakorum.

The indication of the length of vowels is fully developed in the Brāhmī script which was used to write Sanskrit and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. It therefore seems obvious that the indication of vowel length in Kharoṣṭhī developed under the influence of the Brāhmī script in a religious or administrative centre, where the two scripts were used side by side. The spread of Brāhmī towards the north-west had already begun in the Saka period. Indian merchants using Brāhmī script for Gāndhārī Prakrit had already reached China about the middle of the first century B.C., as their presence is attested by the Brāhmī inscription on a silk strip found on the Chinese limes at Tun-huang.

The role played by Buddhist monks in the spread of Brāhmī was even greater. The decisive turning-point was the synod of the Sarvāstivāda school held in Kashmir during the reign of Kanishka, which, according to the tradition, compiled the *Jñānaprasthānam* and entrusted Aśvaghoṣa, the famous poet from Sāketa, with providing for the correct language form of the commentary written by Kātyāyana. In view of the fact that Aśvaghoṣa wrote his works in standard Sanskrit, his commission obviously meant the preference of Sanskrit to Prakrit, which was also used earlier by the Sarvāstivādins. Earlier, both the Mahāsārighika and the Sarvāstivāda schools used Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī equally in the territories where the two scripts spread. Thus, in Mathura, both the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Sarvāstivādins used Brāhmī script for their inscriptions, while both schools adopted Kharoṣṭhī for their epigraphic monuments in Gandhāra.

After the synod of Kashmir, however, the Sarvāstivādins preferred Sanskrit or Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and Brāhmī script, and when they penetrated Bactria on the tracks of the Mahāsāṅghikas, Brāhmī also appeared in the Buddhist monasteries. This development can be seen clearly at Kara-tepe, where inscriptions written in both Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī

occur on earthenware vessels. The Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions belonged to the Mahāsāṅghika school as is proved by the texts themselves. Therefore, the inscriptions written in Brāhmī probably represent the Sarvāstivādins. This connection between script and sect after the synod of Kashmir is further proved by the fact that the first wave of Buddhism brought the Mahāsāṅghika school together with Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī to Khotan, while the second transferred the Sarvāstivādins there together with Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and Brāhmī script.

There can be no doubt that the indication of vowel length in Kharoṣṭhī script came into being under the influence of Brāhmī script in the Buddhist monasteries of northern Bactria, especially in the region of Termez, where Mahāsānghikas and Sarvāstivādins lived side by side, and Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī were used side by side in the Kushan period. Thus, at Kara-tepe, the spellings *kāśi* 'cup' and [*ma*]*hāsamghikānaṃ* 'of the Mahāsānghikas' occur while in Fayaz-tepe the spelling *sarvasatvāna* 'of all beings' is attested.

Gāndhārī Prakrit, the language spoken in Gandhāra and used for administrative and economic purposes by the Kushans, was also one of the literary languages of Buddhism, and before the synod of Kashmir it had produced a relatively rich Buddhist literature which was later thrust into the background by Buddhist works written in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. Of Buddhist works in Gāndhārī Prakrit, only the Kharoṣṭhī *Dhammapada* has been preserved, and this was discovered in Khotan, far to the east of ancient Bactria. The fate of the *Dhammapada* shows what happened to Buddhist Gāndhārī Prakrit literature. It was slowly driven out by the Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit works written in Brāhmī, and only survived to a limited extent in the city-states of the Tarim basin, while even there the local languages, Khotanese, Agnean and Kuchean, used Brāhmī instead of Kharoṣṭhī. Kharoṣṭhī was only retained for administrative purposes in Kucha, where the latest documents are dated between A.D. 618 and 647.

According to Buddhist tradition preserved in the Pālī canon, monks of Brahmanic origin proposed to the Buddha that his words should be put into Sanskrit; and even though the Buddha ordained that everyone should use his own language in reciting the sacred texts, the Sanskritization of Buddhist texts began at an early date. The language, which came into being gradually by the increasing Sanskritization of Buddhist texts fixed in a Middle Indian dialect (Prakrit), became Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

Some Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit works already existed as early as the first century B.C., and the 'nucleus' of the *Mahāvastu* written with the aim of describing the life of the Buddha, may go back to the first century B.C., even though it was successively expanded by additions, the latest of which can be dated to the fourth century A.D. While the growth of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit literature covers half a millennium, its golden age was the period

of the Great Kushans. The most important Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit works were compiled or given their definitive form during this period. These include the *Mahāvastu* the *Lalitavistara* (a Vinaya text of the Lokottaravādins, a school of the Mahāsāṅghikas, originally a work of the Sarvāstivāda school giving a biography of the Buddha), the *Avadānas* (tales of great acts or of the fruits of man's actions, the oldest of which may be the *Avadānaśataka*), the *Divyāvadāna* (a collection of Buddhist legends), and the *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka* (propagating the ideal and the worship of the Bodhisattva and glorifying the Buddha as a being of inconceivable might).

The perfection of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit literature could hardly have taken place without the personality and activity of the great Indian poet Aśvaghoṣa. According to Buddhist tradition he lived at the court of the Kushan king Candana Kanishka, who is to be regarded as Kanishka II, ruling from Years 30 to 42 of the Kanishka era (i.e. A.D. 164–76).

He wrote the two *kāvya* epics, the *Saundarananda* (the legend of the conversion of Nanda, the half-brother of the Buddha) and the *Buddhacarita* (the story of the life of the Buddha himself). Unfortunately, the greater part of Aśvaghoṣa's poetic work has been lost or is only preserved in fragments, but it is clear from his two epics that he was one of the most important poets of Sanskrit literature, who exercised an influence even on Kālidāsa. The style of Aśvaghoṣa is relatively simple and obviously represents the so-called Vaidarbha style, but it is still impressive, sensuous and daintily elaborated. To illustrate this we may quote two verses from the *Buddhacarita* depicting a sleeping beauty of the harem:

> *vibabhau karalagnaveṇur anyā*: *stanavisrastasitāṃśukā śayānā rjuṣaṭpadapanktijuṣṭapadmā*: *jalaphenaprabasattaṭā nadīva*.
>
> One was gleaning, holding a flute in her hand: she was lying with a white garment slipping from her bosom
>
> like the river in whose lotuses whole swarms of bees delight: whose banks laugh with the foam of her waters.

The importance and the popularity of Aśvaghoṣa's poetic works are best shown by their influence on Kālidāsa and their spread beyond the borders of the Kushan Empire to the Tarim basin, and to China in Chinese translations. Gāndhārī Prakrit literature could not set anything of equal literary value against them, and it was not therefore by chance that the fragments of the *Śāriputraprakaraṇa*, a drama of Aśvaghoṣa, came to light in Turfan.

Sogdian

The territory of Sogdiana (the Zerafshan valley) did not belong to the Kushan Empire, but Sogdian merchants engaged in the silk trade often visited both Bactria and Gandhāra.

In some periods they used the route across the Karakorum range to Gilgit, and left many hundreds of Sogdian inscriptions on the rocks at Thor and Shatial Bridge. These Sogdian records were written in the same alphabet as the Sogdian 'Ancient Letters' found on the Chinese limes at Tun-huang from the end of the second century A.D., so the bulk of the Sogdian inscriptions at Thor and Shatial Bridge should belong to the Kushan, or at most to the Late Kushan, period. They mostly consist of the proper name of an individual together with that of his father with some indication of his origin and the circumstances of his journey. Inscriptions with a longer text scarcely occur. It is interesting to note that some of the Sogdian names mentioned in the 'Ancient Letters' as *Nanēβandak*, *Nanēθβār*, Δ*ruvāspβandak*, *Taxsīcβandak* also occur in the inscriptions of Thor and Shatial. As most of the Sogdian names at Thor and Shatial have no parallel in the 'Ancient Letters', the occurrence of the quoted names may have particular importance. Perhaps Taxsīcβandak, father of Nanēβandak, may be identical with Taxsīcβandak, son of Nanēβandak, mentioned in Letter 2; and Δruvāspβandak, father of Farnc, may be the same as Δruvāspβandak, who is also mentioned in Letter 2. In this case the rock inscriptions of Thor and Shatial would be dated to the end of the Kushan and the beginning of the Late Kushan period in the third century A.D.

The same date can be proposed for the Parthian and Middle Persian inscriptions carved on the rock among the Sogdian records. Both the Parthian inscription (*wryḥrn šḥypwḥrn* < Varihrān Šāhipuhrān) and the Middle Persian one (*špyḥ* * *Šapīh* or * *Šipīh*) are written in the Pahlavīk and Pārsīk alphabets of Early Sasanian date, that is, they can also be dated to about A.D. 230–60. The chronological position of these inscriptions enables us to elucidate the historical background of their emergence in Thor and Shatial. Obviously the conquest of the western part of the Kushan kingdom by the Sasanians interfered with traffic and trade between Sogdiana and Kušānšahr (now belonging to Iran), and between Sasanian Kušānšahr and the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent. To keep away from Sasanian Kušānšahr, Sogdian merchants took the route through Gilgit and across the Karakorum range. Later, when political relations between Iran, Sogdiana and the Indian Kushan kingdom were consolidated, the difficult route across the Karakorum was abandoned.

The indications of origin in the Sogdian inscriptions deserve special attention because they considerably enlarge our understanding of trade relations in Central Asia. We may quote the following inscriptions:

4a. *pnšt pysk δβ*rt*βγ'*n *BRY n'βc* 'Pisak, son of θβartβaγān, citizen of Naβ, perished'. Naβ can be identical with Nawa of the Arab geographers, a village 2 – 3 *farsakhs* from Samarkand.

4b. *wnnysrδ ZK nrck BRY wrδnc* ‘Vananisarδ, son of Narcak, citizen of Warδan’. Warδan may be identified with Wardāna of the Arab geographers, an important village in the district of Bukhara.

45. . . .]*p’c BRY šxyβ’yc* ‘[So-and-So], son of [. . .] *p’c* citizen of Šāhβaγ’. The latter name may be compared to Šăhbăhš of Arab geography, a district in the area of Bukhara.

51. *βwxs’kk ZK wnxrk BRY p’yknδc* ‘Bōxsāk, son of Vanxarak, citizen of Paykand’. The town Paykand lay 5 *farsakhs* from Bukhara.

57c. *n’wrβ’ ZK* rwδ’ync ‘Nāwraβa, citizen of Rōδēn’. The toponym Rōδēn ‘Copper [Fort]’ may be another name for Paykand, the ‘Copper Fort’.

135. *xwt’wz’mk ZK kš’yknδc* ‘Xwatāwzāmak, citizen of Kašekanδ’. The latter toponym may be the forerunner of Kāyškan or Kāškan of the Arab geographers (< Kašikanδ), a village in the neighbourhood of Bukhara.

Most of the indications of origin refer to the territory of Bukhara and Samarkand. Besides, there are some remarkable indications:

9c. *xnsc δwyt’kk cyn’nch* ‘Xansacδuytāk, daughter of Xansac, citizen of Cinānc’. The fuller form of this toponym was Cinānckanδ; it was the Sogdian name for Turfan.

64b. This is the record of *wrβ’kk ZK ‘kwc’k* ‘Warβāk, the citizen of Kuča’. Warβāk seems to be a name of Kuchean origin (cf. Kuchean *wārw* -, to stimulate).

122b. This mentions *pysk ZK rxwtc* ‘Pisak, citizen of Raxwat’. Raxwat is the Middle Iranian name for Arachosia.

Thus the settlements of the Sogdians were already spread throughout the whole of Central Asia. From Bukhara and Samarkand to Turfan and from Arachosia to Kucha, they played an important intermediary role in the mutual exchange of both material and intellectual culture between Iran, India and China in the Kushan age.

18

STATES IN NORTH-WESTERN CENTRAL ASIA*

N. N. Negmatov

Contents

The transition to sedentary culture

The Aral and Syr Darya region of northern Central Asia has, in almost every period of its history, been the junction at which the advanced sedentary civilization of the south met the nomadic peoples of the boundless steppes to the north. It was the area where successive waves of sedentary farming people from the Indus valley, Bactria, Parthia, Margiana, Sogdiana and neighbouring lands met and intermingled with similar movements from the pastoral societies of the Eurasian steppes. This far-flung Iranian-speaking population gave rise to the civilizations of Central Asia's sedentary and nomadic peoples.

There were a number of social, economic, political, ethnic and cultural processes underway in the Aral and Syr Darya region at this time, the most important being the gradual

* See Map 8.

transition from a primeval tribal society to the formation of classes and early forms of statehood, which involved the introduction and intensification of a farming economy, urbanization, the consolidation of ethnic communities and the emergence of the historical regions with a sedentary culture.

Ethnic history

In all these processes an important role was played by the changes that followed the introduction of iron. In Central Asia this occurred during the first half of the first millennium B.C. The process of learning to produce iron was facilitated by previous experience of working bronze, but the new technology was assimilated slowly and the obvious advantages of the new metal were not immediately recognized. At the start of the Early Iron Age tools and weapons made partly of bronze and partly of iron – daggers with an iron blade and a bronze handle – were quite widespread. When, however, iron came into full use, it provided great opportunities for socio-economic progress.

This transitional phase, in which Central Asia advanced from its primeval condition to the formation of classes and early states on the basis of an agricultural and pastoral economy, is reflected in the oldest texts of the *Avesta*. It lists among 'the best of regions and countries' *airyanam vaējō* the Iranian territory probably lying to the north of Gava (Sogdiana), Mouru (Margiana or Mesrv) and Bāxδi (Bactria). This was the first country in which Zoroaster's teachings spread. It lay around the River Daitya and its winter lasted for ten months. Many scholars have long equated it with Khwārizm (Chorasmia) and the River Dāityā with the Amu Darya, while some have sought to identify Chorasmia as the Avestan *dahyu* or confederation of lands and link it with the work of Vištāspa, in whom they see the chief of the confederation.[1] It may, however, be suggested that the lands of the *Avesta* most probably correspond to the ethnogeological connotations of its name – the Aryan territory. Its socio-cultural character includes the entire Aral and Syr Darya belt of northern Central Asia, which was then a zone of sedentary farming and nomadic pastoral people, stretching from Chorasmia through Čāč (Chach) and Usrushana to Ferghana in the east. In this context we can refer to a 'Greater Chorasmia' as the supposed equivalent to *airyanam vaējō*.[2] The Chorasmians are incidentally mentioned by Herodotus and Hecataeus of Miletus. This suggestion is also borne out by the written and archaeological evidence for Chorasmia and the Syr Darya basin, which were closely linked in many aspects of social, cultural

[1] For a summary of information on *airyanəm vaējō* and its location in Chorasmia, see *Istoriya Tadzhikskogo naroda*, 1963, pp. 151–4, 509–10; *Istoriya Uzbekskoy SSR*, 1967, pp. 84–5; Gafurov, 1972, pp. 37–8, 50, 52.

[2] Gafurov, 1972 pp. 58–9; Vorob'eva, 1979, pp. 38–42. See Chapter 2 above.

and economic life. They are located on the northern periphery of the sedentary farming cultures and have many common elements of material culture – far more than the elements that Chorasmia may have in common with regions of Merv and Herat.

The Early Iron Age in Central Asia was marked by the establishment, between the seventh and fifth centuries B.C., of a federation uniting the Iranian-speaking sedentary and semi-nomadic tribes of the region under the political hegemony of the Chorasmians. In Chorasmia, Usrushana and Ferghana there was rapid urbanization – a rapid growth of towns and their fortification, the construction of city citadels and the development of agriculture by artificial irrigation works. These mark the transition to a class society and the emergence of a strong central authority which undertook public works, and eventually developed new forms of economy based on sedentary farming and urban culture. At the height of its power under Darius I, the Achaemenid Empire included Chorasmia, the Sakā Tigraxaudā (or Massagetae), Sogdiana and the 'Sakas who are beyond Sogdiana'. The first three are recorded in the list of countries subordinate to the next king, Xerxes (486–465 B.C.), and in the inscriptions (DNa, DSe, XPh) and reliefs at Persepolis, Susa and Naqsh-i Rustam. As a result, a significant proportion of the sedentary zone of northern Central Asia was included in the Achaemenid Empire at the height of its prosperity. Only Ferghana lay beyond its borders. Chorasmia, with Sogdiana, Parthia and Aria, made up the sixteenth satrapy, which paid 300 silver talents in tribute to the imperial treasury. The fifth satrapy of the Sakas paid 250 silver talents (1 silver talent in this case amounted to 34 kg).

Chorasmia, Sogdiana and the Sakas played a considerable role in the economy and politics of the Achaemenid Empire. Sources record their presence in the capital, and the presence of Chorasmians on Elephantine Island (on the Nubian border) and at Memphis, and both Chorasmians and Sakas in Nippur and other Babylonian cities. Chorasmian and Saka names are known from Sippar in Babylonia.[3] A Saka detachment fought in Darius' army at the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.); Saka cavalry and Chorasmian and Sogdian warriors were included in Xerxes' élite units during his campaign against Greece. Saka infantry took part in the battles of Thermopylae (480 B.C.) and Plataea (479 B.C.). Terracotta figurines of Saka warriors in pointed caps have been found in excavations at various places in the empire, ranging from Egypt to Central Asia. By the second half of the fourth century B.C., however, Chorasmia and the Sakas had become independent states – rather earlier than the other, more southerly, parts of Central Asia. ethnic history developed from the tribal distribution of the Late Bronze Age. The Iranian-speaking population in the valleys and oases of northern Central Asia became more localized and stable. The Chorasmian people emerged on the southern Aral coast and in the Amu Darya delta; a Saka

[3] Further details will be found in *Istoriya Tadzhikskogo naroda*, 1963, pp. 208–9; Gafurov, 1972, p. 83.

community arose between the lower Amu Darya and the Syr Darya and in the hill country of the upper Syr Darya; and a northern branch of the Sogdians was settled on the left-bank flatlands of the middle Syr Darya. Somewhat later, the Saka and Sogdian populations of the middle and upper Syr Darya established Ferghana and Usrushana. The formation of these ethnic groupings was promoted by two complementary processes – the emergence of sedentary regions in which the dominant occupation was agriculture, and the beginnings of urbanization. The Chorasmians, Sogdians and Sakas shared many ethnic and cultural traits with other peoples and tribes of Central Asia. Valuable evidence for their anthropological and ethnic characteristics come from the Bisutun, Persepolis and Naqsh-i Rustam reliefs. To judge from this evidence, the Central Asian peoples and tribes were virtually indistinguishable in clothing, head-gear and armaments. Their dress was much the same, consisting of short tunics, a broad belt and narrow trousers; only the Sakā Tigraxaudā were set apart by their sharp-pointed cap. Ancient Greek and Persian accounts do not distinguish between the oasis peoples and the steppe tribes. On the contrary, they claim that 'the Massagetae and Sakas also include Attasians and Chorasmians' and that 'in ancient times the Sogdians and Bactrians differed little from the nomads in life-style and customs' (Strabo). All this points to close ethnic, linguistic and cultural bonds between the Central Asian peoples and the tribes speaking Eastern Iranian languages of the Indo-European group, while anthropological analysis of excavation material shows that they were all of Europoid type. Between the seventh and fifth centuries B.C., all these peoples were in the final stages of the transition to a sedentary farming and pastoral life-style.

Irrigation and agriculture

The development and success of the agricultural economy was closely dependent on the progress made in artificial irrigation. This had been introduced in the Late Bronze Age, and agricultural and pastoral techniques were still relatively primitive in the Early Iron Age, but advanced irrigation networks were developed in Chorasmia and Ferghana between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C. (see Chapter 12). Different types of irrigation were developed to meet different geographical circumstances. On the plains of Chorasmia and Ferghana, in the Amu Darya deltas and on the upper and middle Syr Darya, spring and summer floods were used to store water, which was then diverted into artificial canals.

In foothill areas, tunnel irrigation was the commonest form: groundwater was diverted via underground catchment tunnels. In the mountains meltwater streams were used. Artificial irrigation was intensively developed, particularly in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and along the delta arms, where the steady flow was easier to control. Chorasmia

had grand canals 20 to 40 m wide but not very deep, extending for a distance of 60 to 70 km. In the Aral and Syr Darya region, the irrigation system was complex. Farming on mountain terraces and in river basins and basin (estuary) farming depended on natural rain with the water supply controlled by dykes and dams.[4] In the valleys of the Syr Darya and lower Amu Darya, the development of artificial irrigation made agriculture the basis of the state economy. The agricultural products included millet, barley, sesame and wheat. In addition to cereals and oil crops, pumpkins, melons, fruit such as apricots, peaches and plums, and vineyards were cultivated in the oases, while orchards of apricots, walnuts and almonds were grown in the hills.

Mining and manufacture

Archaeological studies and written sources indicate that the population was engaged in various occupations – in mining and smelting copper and iron, mining precious stones, manufacturing tools, arms and pottery, and in weaving and building activities. Internal trade and commerce flourished among the population of the oases and steppes in Chorasmia, Ferghana and Usrushana. The region was involved in trade with countries to the south of Central Asia, India, the northern Aral steppes and possibly the Volga region. Gold, copper, silver and iron were mined in the Kyzyl Kum, the Nuratau mountains, the Naukat deposit in the Ferghana valley, the Khojand hills, the Kurama (Kara-Mazar mountains) and Chatkal ranges, the Ahangaran valley, the Almalyk district and the Karatau mountains. Many places where metals were smelted have been identified, complete with fragments of slag, in settlements in the Kayrak Kums. These probably drew their raw materials from deposits at Naukat, Uchkatli Miskon, Dzhidargamirsay, Chakadambulak, Aktashkan, Kochbulak and Koni Mansur in the Kara-Mazar. Antimony workings from the middle of the first millennium B.C. are known at Bagashiny in the Sokh river valley in south-western Ferghana. Piles of copper slag have been recorded in the southern Bukantau hills and along the Kerichetau range near the Aral Sea. Greenstone hammers and a large stone pick weighing as much as 8 kg have been found, used by ancient miners chiefly for open-cast ore-mining. Hammers, rounded or elongated, were made of rectangular pebbles with the sharp edges struck off for ease of attachment to the wooden shaft.

The quantity of the metals and the range of artefacts made from them, particularly arms, harness, armour, sickles, knives, needles, jewellery and personal ornaments, are seen in the objects found in archaeological excavations. According to Herodotus (I.215), the Massagetae used bows and lances, but their favourite weapon was the battle-axe. They

[4] Andrianov, 1969, p. 231.

used copper for their battle-axes, spear-points and arrow-heads, and adorned their head-gear, belts and girdles with gold. Their horses had breast-plates of copper, but they inlaid their horse trappings with gold. Both gold and copper were abundant, but not silver or iron. Precious stones were also found there. Turquoise was mined in the land of the Sakas (Pliny), possibly in the Nuratau, Khojand and Isfara mountains and in the Kyzyl Kum. According to the DSf inscription of Darius, when his palace in Susa was built, *kāsaka haya axšaina* (turquoise) was brought from Chorasmia and *kāsaka haya kapautaka* (blue stone or lapis lazuli) and *sinkabruš* (carnelian or cinnabar) from Sogdiana. During this period the bulk of those who produced material goods in the region's sedentary farming and pastoral societies lived in kinship-based rural, or later urban, communes and were collectively engaged in agriculture or in domestic crafts. They paid rent to the state, the tribal military aristocracy and the clergy, and also had other social obligations. The class of slaves included those made captive in war and impoverished commune mem- bers, who had to work on the farms of landlords, help in building and maintaining irrigation systems, or join the private armies of the rulers and the aristocracy.

In the steppes and mountains, cattle-breeding and horticulture dominated economic activities. The rapid growth of cattle-breeding, particularly in the steppes, played an increasing role in the economy as a whole, changed the lifestyle of the pastoral population and added to the importance of these areas as against oases with their craftsmen and farmers. The two economies supplemented each other in a way that increased general prosperity, but eventually led to the emergence of a class structure and the exploitation of slave labour.

The development of cities and urbanization

The process of urbanization began earlier and on a greater scale in Chorasmia and on the left bank of the middle Syr Darya, localities which were more advanced in economic and cultural terms. They were geographically closer to the ancient urban centres of south-western and southern Central Asia and were open to their influence through Margiana and Sogdiana. They were later incorporated as provinces of the Achaemenid Empire and came into its socio-economic orbit for a time. In the southern Aral region, the sedentary farmers and pastoralists of the Chorasmian oasis represent the Late Bronze Age Amirabad cultural pattern seen in the Dzhanbas and Yakka-Parsan settlements. At that time they had master craftsmen (the 'house of the caster') with settled houses and social gradations.[5]

The oldest Chorasmian city, and the key monument of this period, was Kyuzeli-gîr, dating from the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. It lay on the left bank of the Amu Darya in

[5] Itina, 1977*a*.

the Sarîkamîsh region of the delta. Standing on a natural elevation, roughly triangular in ground-plan, it occupied an area of 25 ha. The city was surrounded by a powerful defensive wall with oval bastions. Its residential district was densely packed with buildings of rectangular unbaked brick and *pakhsa*. It had an advanced pottery industry, based on the wheel, and art objects of a type common in Saka burial complexes of the period have been found.[6] Another early city of the same date, Kalalî-gîr, was surrounded by triple walls with bastions and had four gates with entrance barbicans and a hill-top palace, but it was never completed.

In Chorasmia, in the eastern part of the south Akcha Darya delta, the agricultural oasis of Dingildzhe dates from the fifth century B.C. The eastern part of the site was occupied by a large house with many rooms and out-buildings, the western part by a large courtyard. The whole was surrounded by an outer wall 2 m thick, built of large rectangular unbaked bricks of archaic type. The archaeologist who studied the farmstead suggests that it might have been a communal home for the extended family of the district governor. Its inhabitants were engaged in agriculture and cattle-breeding within the oasis, pottery, metal-work and making farm products. Dingildzhe points to the relatively high standard of architecture, building techniques and design that prevailed in ancient Chorasmia.[7]

Between the fourth and second centuries B.C. Chorasmia had a series of walled cities with strong moats, complex fortifications and gateway barbicans. They defended farming districts that lay along the caravan routes, and served as centres for crafts, trade and culture. They include Dzhanbas-kala and Bazar-kala, with precise and regular ground-plans, on the right bank and Hazarasp (Sauvar) and Dzhingirbent on the left bank of the Amu Darya.[8] Chorasmia's ancient cities and fortresses have several characteristic features. They were either built on marshland where the farming population met the steppe, or stood on the major trade routes. Fortresses on the plains, such as Hazarasp, had a regular rectangular ground-plan; smaller fortresses stood on high ground, such as Kalalî-gîr II, Lesser Kîrkkîz, Burli-kala; and at the foot lay undefended secondary settlements, such as Guldursun, Akcha Gelin, Kunya-Uaz and Toprak-kala. Their size and strength contrasted sharply with the mass of small unfortified settlements in the farming oases.[9]

The outstanding structure of ancient Chorasmia was the great religious centre of this far-flung region, the fortified sanctuary of Koy-Krîlgan-kala (fourth century B.C. to fourth century A.D.) in the southern Akcha Darya delta, on the right bank of the Amu Darya. Circular in ground-plan with a diameter of about 90 m (Fig. 1), it consists of a large

[6] Tolstov, 1962, pp. 96–104; Vishnevskaya, 1972, pp. 533–4, 1978, pp. 544–5; Vorob'eva, 1979, p. 39.
[7] Vorob'eva, 1973.
[8] Tolstov, 1948, pp. 113 et seq.; Itina, 1977*b* pp. 193–202; Itina, 1981, p. 15.
[9] Nerazik, 1972, pp. 34–7, 1981, pp. 219–27.

cylindrical building surrounded at a distance of 15 m by a fortress wall. The space between the building and the wall is occupied by several tiers of buildings. The site has two periods of occupation and three phases of building. The central two-storey building is a round, monumental structure with a single row of arrow-slits over a row of trapezoid windows. In the lower storey there were eight rooms roofed with twin domes, communicating with the central chamber by arched passages. It is thought that the central building may have been a temple, whose lower storey had religious functions, while the upper part served as a store. The lower floor was divided into two identical halves, suggesting that the temple may have been used as an astronomical observatory, as is suggested by its alignment. Shortly after the central structure was completed, the open space up to the fortress walls began to be filled with houses and storage premises. In the second period of construction the ruined central building was partially adapted for living quarters; some rooms were cleared and repaired and the whole area between the central building and the fortress wall was filled with clearly separated blocks of buildings. The third construction period provided a number of similar houses which utilized the older buildings. Each house was probably an independent economic unit. The finds, especially the pottery, reinforce this interpretation. The bottom stratum contains an assemblage of well-formed vessels with a red slip – a censer, small-stepped altars and terracotta figurines representing deities of the Chorasmian pantheon. The upper strata, however, yielded a completely new series of pottery with a light-coloured slip, unusual in Chorasmia, with the commonly found Kushan-style vessels and coins. Koy-Krîlgan-kala[10]may be associated with an astral cult.

The system of Chorasmian fortification reached a high standard in this period. Walled cities usually had a severely regular rectangular ground-plan divided by an axial street. Koy-Krîlgan-kala, the only example of a fortified sanctuary, takes the form of a central building surrounded by an external wall strengthened with nine bastions. Frontier fortresses were built at strategic points on the borders of oases, defended by many-tiered projecting bastions spaced to command all approaches. Fortified houses had a dual role, for residence and defence. Chorasmian fortifications were developed particularly between the fourth century B.C. and the first century A.D. Eventually private castles proliferated and fortresses of new design developed on the edge of the oases. The walls of cities, fortresses and settlements in ancient Chorasmia were built on inclined *pakhsa* or raw-brick socles. They were 10–20 m high and 5–8 m thick. To strengthen the defences, supplementary outer walls were built 5–20 m from the fortress walls, with open ground intervening. Arrow slits were generally arrow-shaped and to widen their fire they were grouped in a chessboard

[10] *Koy-Krî1gan-kala*, 1967.

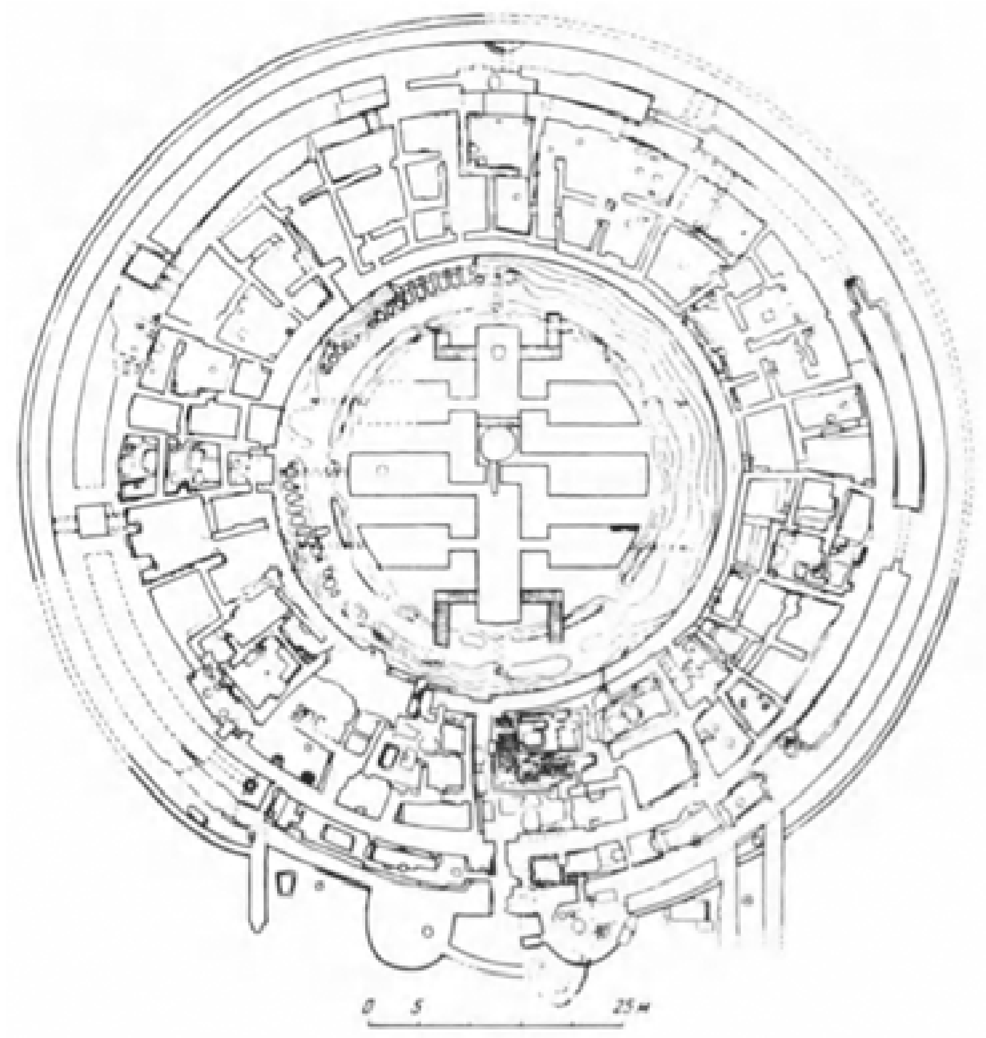


FIG. 1. Koy-Krîlgan-kala. Drawing from an aerial photograph. E. J. Brill, Leiden.

pattern. Particular attention was paid to the gates, which sometimes had additional projecting bastions at the entry, on the corners and along the sides.[11]

There is evidence of cattle-breeding in the Sarîkamîsh area of the Amu Darya delta. Here archaeologists have discovered the Kuyusay culture, represented by settlements and burial-grounds (between the seventh and fourth centuries B.C.), Its culture has a local Saka substratum in close contact with an external component, reflected in imported wheel-thrown pottery from southwestern and southern Central Asia.[12] There is a striking variety of burial rites in Chorasmia at this period and a growing influence of the Zoroastrian rite with its ossuary type of burial is clearly discernible.

[11] Khodzhaniyazov, 1981, pp. 43–56.
[12] Vaynberg, 1979, pp. 1–76.

The economic and cultural pattern of the semi-sedentary Saka-Massagetae pastoralists and farmers in the lower Syr Darya plain is illustrated by a series of sites: the extremely rich mausoleum complexes for tribal leaders in the northern Tagisken country from the late second and early first millennia B.C. with their monumental raw-brick architecture and pottery, made by skilled craftsmen; the sixth-to-fifth-century-B.C. barrows at Uygarak and in southern Tagisken;[13] the fourth-to-second-century-B.C. walled settlements of Chirik-Rabat and Babîsh Molla, together with their farming land and its irrigation works on the Zhani Darya[14] to the west of the Syr Darya; and finally, the monuments of agricultural oases at Dzhetî-Asar along the tributaries of the Zhani Darya and Kuvan Darya, which lasted from the first century B.C. to the Early Middle Ages.[15] All these suggest a distinctive, complex culture with an advanced pastoral economy alongside agriculture. There were large cities, smaller settlements, a system of fortress-type strongholds with thick walls and towers and enormous burial grounds. The early phases are marked by monumental raw-brick architecture, wheel-thrown vessels and ornaments that incorporate elements from the southern farming cultures (the northern Tagisken cemeteries imported Yaz-II-type pottery, beads and animal figure art, drawn from the worlds of Central and Western Asia (from Uygarak and south Tagisken) and elements of the Scytho-Siberian animal style (from southern Tagisken and Uygarak).

On the left bank of the middle Syr Darya, urbanization was intensive and impressive in scale. Here in Usrushana the earliest urban centres were formed between the seventh and fifth centuries B.C. The fortress-city of Khvatak (now the site of Nur-tepe), stands on a high chain of hills on the north-western edge of the Ura-Tyube oasis. Some 16 ha in area, it consists of a citadel and town surrounded by a system of fortifications. The southern defence of the city consisted of a natural dyke of loess and a wall of *pakhsa*, 8 m thick, built between the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Within the town and citadel, excavations have revealed thick cultural strata containing the remnants of the original underground dwellings and of later well-designed *pakhsa* and unbaked-brick structures. The finds include an assortment of wheel-turned and hand-luted pots for storage, cooking and table use, querns and spindle whorls. The irrigation system, using mountain streams and springs, helped develop the agricultural economy. Craftsmen also played an important role in city life. The powerful defences of both town and citadel, its complex architecture and planning structure and the fine pottery arc evidence of the advanced social life and cultural level of the city.[16]

[13] Vishnevskaya, 1973; Tolstov and Itina, 1966, pp. 151–75; Vishnevskaya and Itina, 1971, pp. 197–208.
[14] Tolstov, 1962, pp. 136–86.
[15] Levina, 1971,Vol. 7.
[16] Negmatov et al., 1982, pp. 89–111.

Kurukata (Cyropolis in classical sources) is known to have been the second oldest and largest city of Usrushana, with powerful defensive walls and a specially strengthened inner fort. Many opinions have been expressed about its location. Although the name 'Kurukata' has been preserved in the name of the modern settlement of Kurkat in northern Tajikistan (and the ruins of an ancient city lie nearby) it is preferable to identify it with Ura-Tyube. The heavily fortified citadel (Mug-tepe), here in its centre, 6 ha in area, is surrounded by high, thick walls. Excavations have revealed deep cultural strata with architectural remains from the sixth to the second centuries B.C.[17] Written records also speak of the old Usrushanian fortress-cities of Gaza, Baga and four others that are unnamed. The city walls at Gaza are, however, 'earthen and low'.[18] The remaining cities of the province are being explored.

Besides the above-mentioned sites, archaeologists have discovered another major urban centre, on the Khojand plain on the left bank of the Syr Darya where Usrushana meets Ferghana. It was founded in the sixth to fifth centuries B.C. and was fortified initially with loess dykes and later with defensive walls of large unbaked bricks of an archaic rectangular type. It occupied a square site, 20 ha in area, and consisted of two parts: the town itself and the citadel. It was inhabited continuously up to the early centuries of our era. The earliest strata produced wheel-thrown and hand-made pottery for storage (pitchers and jars), for cooking (hand-made cauldrons) and for the table (bowls, cups, vase-like vessels and goblets), including carefully made, technically advanced examples which borrowed pottery techniques from southern Central Asia and from the central Ferghana's Eylatan culture (seventh to fourth century B.C.) Large grainstores using pitchers, stone querns, pestles and terracotta spindle whorls have been found, indicating cereal farming, milling, the storage of foodstuffs and other craft products and suggesting that the local economy was based on agriculture and local crafts.[19]

Development in Ferghana

In Ferghana an early farming life-style was established at oases of the Chust culture (e.g. Dalverzin and Chust) which had underground structures dating from the tenth to the eighth centuries B.C.[20] In the subsequent (Eylatan) period (seventh to fourth century B.C.) agricultural settlements with traces of ground-level architecture and defensive dykes appear. They

[17] Negmatov, 1957, pp. 16–20; Ranov and Saltovskaya, 1961, pp. 117–29; Negmatov and Saltovskaya, 1962, pp. 71–7.
[18] Negmatov, 1957, pp. 21–3.
[19] Negmatov, 1962, 1973, 1975, 1980*b*.
[20] Zadneprovskiy, 1962, pp. 11–107, 1966, pp. 193–207, 1978.

provide a clear picture of early towns in the Shurabashat and Markhamat (the Ta-yüan and Kushan) periods between the fourth century B.C. and the fourth century A.D. Cultural strata from these two periods have been recorded at the sites of Eylatan, Shurabashat, Kara Darya, Markhamat, Minga-tepe, Dzhelandî, Turtkul', Severo-Kur-shab-I, Kurgan-tepe, Yangibazar, Uchkurgan and Kaynovat.[21]

The Eylatan culture of Ferghana is known from a number of excavated sites. Eylatan, in eastern Ferghana, between the Naryn and the Kara Darya rivers, consists of an inner walled village 20 ha in area and an outside dyked area of 200 ha that might have been used for cattle-pens. The residential settlement had ground structures but no citadel. Finds include pottery, hand-made on a cloth mould (a sand-filled bag), and wheel-thrown pottery of the same shapes, the commonest types being round-based cups and bowls. The cups were often painted with horizontal lines and sometimes with decorative designs. Eylatan-type pottery is found in the lower strata at Shurabashat and other sites in eastern Ferghana.

To this sedentary farming culture belong the Aktam, Niyazbatîr and Kungai burial-grounds of central Ferghana, all with much the same burial inventory of pottery, iron bracelets, pins, beads, earrings, iron knives and bronze arrow-heads. There are, however, different grave arrangements: 'small' mounds with a single burial pit and long ones with three to nine pits in Aktam, 'long' graves 30 m from north to south, with three to eleven burials, and 'small' round ones with one to three burials, all resembling cairns of cobble-stones, in Kungai. The differences can probably be explained by membership of different ethnic groups. In the Shurabashat and Markhamat periods, the development of agriculture and the growth of urban centres were matched by the construction of an irrigation network, the establishment of a separate Ferghana state (Tayüan) and the emergence of ancient Ferghana's Iranian-speaking people, the Parikanians, from local Saka and Sogdian stock.[22]

In the Chirchik and Ahangaran District of Čāč (Chach), small early urban centres sprang up around the settlement of the predominantly farming cultures of the very Late Burgulyuk period (ninth to fourth century B.C.) and throughout the Kaunchi period (third century B.C. to eighth century A.D.). One such centre has been identified at Shash-tepe in the city of Tashkent. A Late Burgulyuk cultural stratum on continental loess was found to contain the remains of sixth-to-mid-fourth-century-B.C. semi-subterranean houses, while above was the first defensive wall of the Shash-tepe fort, made of raw brick and *pakhsa* and dating from the mid-third century B.C. By that date the farming settlement of the mid-first millennium had developed into a small town with an area of about 1 ha with a defensive wall.[23] A

21 Zadneprovskiy, 1962, pp. 108–99; Gorbunova, 1977, pp. 107–20, 1979, pp. 16–34.
22 Zadneprovskiy, 1956, pp. 39–44, 1978, pp. 47–9.
23 Filanovich, 1980, pp. 459–60.

small urban centre dating from the first centuries B.C. has been identified beneath the site of Kanka, and in the Kaunchi-II period (fourth to fifth century A.D.) a host of urban-type settlements arose. Tashkent too was developing as a town, with urban components of a town fort, a ruler's palace and a šahristān. Archaeologists conclude that the ancient cultural substratum underlying the urban and rural culture of Čāč, or that part of the Chirchik valley that was incorporated into 'Greater Tashkent', was the Kaunchi culture.[24] The evidence of the largest site, Kaunchi-tepe, dates the beginning of irrigated agriculture in 'Greater Tashkent' to the third and second centuries B.C.[25] and the construction of the first artificial canal, that of Baz-su, to the first century B.C.[26] The agricultural use of the Chirchik basin and the construction of canals developed during the early centuries A.D.[27] The initial phase of the urbanization of Čāč can then be dated significantly later than that of other parts of the region.[28]

A review of the urbanization process in the Aral and Syr Darya zone of northern Central Asia and the descriptions given above of the early urban centres of Chorasmia, Khojand, Usrushana, Ferghana and Čāč consequently enable us to state that the earliest of these centres, the most impressive in terms of area, topography and planning and the most advanced in economic and cultural respects, were those of Usrushana and Khojand on the left bank of the middle Syr Darya. These centres witnessed the transformation of cultural traditions coming from other parts of northern Central Asia.

The towns and urban culture of Chorasmia and the upper and middle Syr Darya seem to have based their development on predominantly local traditions and on those drawn from the centre (Sarazm), south (Sapalli, Dashli and Kuchuk-tepe) and south-west (Altyn-tepe) of Central Asia.[29]We see a combination of local traditions, the use of cultural standards established in other centres and cultural interaction and cross-fertilization.

Subsequent developments

In the last centuries B.C. and the first centuries of the Christian era the agricultural areas in the Aral and Syr Darya zones developed chiefly within the independent states of Chorasmia (Khwārizm) and Ta-yüan (Ferghana), though for brief periods they were partially included

[24] Buryakov, 1975, pp. 186–7; Filanovich and Abdullaev, 1975, p. 515; Abdullaev et al., 1977, p. 522; Buryakov et al., 1979, p. 546.
[25] *Drevniy Tashkent*1973, p. 141; *Drevnosti Tashkenta*,1976, pp. 49, 115–16, 124, 130; *Drevnosti Tuyabuguza*,1978, pp. 112, 158.
[26] *Drevniy Tashkent*, 1973, pp. 102–3.
[27] *Drevnosti Charvaka*,1976, pp. 83–4.
[28] Rtveladze, 1980, p. 29.
[29] Negmatov, 1982*a*, pp. 61, 63, 1982*b*, pp. 51–3, 1982*c*, pp. 72–88.

as provinces of the empires of Alexander the Great, the Seleucids, Graeco-Bactrians and Kushans. Between 290 and 160 B.C., Usrushana and Khojand appear to have been part of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom.[30] These political changes influenced their material culture. Archaeological investigations have revealed Hellenistic elements in Usrushana, Khojand and western Ferghana[31] and finds from Khojand clearly betray Hellenistic influence in the formation of Central Asia's culture.[32]

FERGHANA (TA-YÜAN)

Around 160 B.C. Usrushana and Khojand became independent of the Graeco-Bactrians: Ferghana, it seems, had never been part of it, and Greek ascendancy never extended beyond the regions conquered by Alexander.[33] A remark by Strabo (XI.11.1), however, has led many scholars to assume that Ferghana was included in Graeco-Bactria. Coins of the Graeco-Bactrian monarchs have been found there, but possibly as a result of commerce.[34] In the mid-second century B.C. the Yüeh-chih tribes passed southwards through Ferghana and Usrushana, and subsequently conquered Bactria. It seems likely that the far-flung, wealthy and densely populated state of Ta-yüan arose about the same time. Much detailed information about this state is given by the Chinese chronicler Szŭ-ma Ch'ien, who passed through Ta-yüan in the latter half of the second century B.C.[35] The name Ta-yüan was used until the second century A.D., when it was replaced by Pu-han and Pa-han-na (fifth century A.D.) – the Chinese transcriptions of the name 'Ferghana'. The identification of Ta-yüan with Ferghana is firmly established in historical literature.[36]

According to the Chinese sources, the country had many large and small towns and settlements, numbering over seventy. The population was 300,000 and the inhabitants had deep-set eyes and thick beards; they were skilled merchants and held women in high esteem. The country's army numbered 60,000 fighting men armed with bows and spears, skilled in shooting from horseback. It was a land of highly developed agriculture; both wheat and rice were grown; there were large vineyards, wine was made and stored for dozens of years, and much *mu-su* (lucerne) was sown. Particularly famous were the Ferghana horses, highly prized in neighbouring lands and especially in China. They were said to 'sweat blood' and were considered 'heavenly'. Emperor Wu-ti was particularly keen to

30 Negmatov, 1957, p. 287.
31 Negmatov, 1980*a*, pp. 54–6.
32 Belyaeva, 1980, pp. 11–12.
33 Bartol'd, 1964, p. 456.
34 Gafurov, 1972, p. 123.
35 Bichurin, 1950, Vol. II, pp. 161–2, 186–8.
36 Gafurov, 1972, p. 132.

have these blood-sweating horses. At one time they were worshipped in China and poets wrote odes to them.

Ta-yüan also included Khojand and Usrushana.[37] To the north and west it bordered on K'ang and to the south on the Yüeh-chih or Kushan possessions. Its capital was the city of Ershi, identifiable either with the ancient site of Mark- hamat in Andizhan District or with Khojand or Ura-Tyube.[38] Its rulers also had a residence in the city of Yu-chen, possibly present-day Uzgen. As it was rich in horses, Ta-yüan attracted the attention of the Han emperors, who attempted to subdue Ta-yüan. Many years of warfare ensued against these invaders. In 104 B.C. General Li Kuang-li moved against Ta-yüan with a 100,000-strong army – 60,000 cavalry and 'several dozen thousands of young warriors from China. The war lasted for four years. The entire Han Empire was set in motion. More than fifty chieftains were sent to Ta-yüan . . . '. The campaign was carefully prepared: the Chinese army even included craftsmen to divert the water from Ferghana's cities and horse marshals to select 'heavenly' horses in Ferghana; it carried 'dried food provisions'. Headed by their king, Mu-ku-a, the people of Ferghana fought the invaders boldly. Both sides suffered heavy losses and Mu-ku-a died through treachery. Particularly ferocious was the forty-day siege of the capital of Ferghana. According to Szŭ-ma Ch'ien, 'Regardless of all this, the Chinese could not enter the city and took the road back', contenting themselves with 'several dozen of the renowned horses' and elevating to the throne, instead of Mu-ku-a, the old Ferghana magnate Mo-tsai. However, they did not succeed in entrenching themselves in Ferghana. After their army had withdrawn, the puppet ruler was killed by the people, and the younger brother of the valiant Mu-ku-a, known in Chinese as Chang-fun, was placed on the throne. It is interesting to note that the Chinese took from Ferghana the art of cultivating vines, lucerne and possibly also pomegranates, cucumbers, walnuts and figs.

CHORASMIA (KHWĀRIZM)

Chorasmia had secured its independence from Persia before the end of the Achaemenid Empire. According to Arrian (IV. 15.4–6) Pharasmanes, King of Chorasmia, visited Alexander during his sojourn in Bactria in 329–320 B.C. and promised to guide him and provide supplies for his army if he chose to proceed against Colchis and the Amazons, subduing all the races that lived in these regions up to the Euxine Sea. The arrival of an embassy from the European Scythians in this context probably refers to the Saka-Massagetae, their neighbours from the Aral regions. A friendly alliance was concluded with the head of the Chorasmian state. Between the fourth and first centuries B.C.,

[37] Bichurin, 1950, Vol. II, p. 312.
[38] Bernshtam, 1951, p. 11; Aristov, 1903, p. 93.

Chorasmia was a powerful independent state. Although there is virtually no written information, there is incontrovertible evidence about the growth of its ancient cities and settlements with strong and structurally developed fortifications which have been discovered in recent times. Little is known about the country's political history in the early centuries of the Christian era.

It has been suggested that Chorasmia formed part of the Kushan Empire[39] and that the latter stretched from the Aral Sea to the Indian Ocean.[40] Although there is as yet no firm evidence to substantiate the claims concerning 'Chorasmia in the Kushan Empire' that are frequently found in the literature[41] and some scholars locate the northern borders of the Kushans far to the south of Chorasmia, [42] the Aral region and the lands between the lower Amu Darya and Syr Darya – in fact the boundary areas – were still held by semi-sedentary and nomadic Saka-Massagetae tribes under the influence of Chorasmian culture.

[39] Tolstov, 1948, p. 151, 1962, p. 224; Gulyamov, 1974, p. 119.
[40] Gafurov, 1974 p. 61.
[41] Gafurov, 1972 p. 151.
[42] Masson, 1975 pp. 42–9.

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THE NOMADS OF NORTHERN CENTRAL ASIA AFTER THE INVANSION OF ALEXANDER*

Y. A. Zadneprovskiy

Contents

Transoxania

A small part of Transoxania came under the rule of Alexander the Great after his eastern campaign, but in Transoxania and in the steppes the nomads who belonged to various tribes of Sakas and Massagetae played the dominant political role. Several important changes had occurred on the steppes of Eurasia. In the west the Scythians were succeeded by the Sarmatians, while in the east a strong nomadic power had emerged – the Hsiung-nu (Huns). This important epoch in the history of the nomads of Eurasia is aptly named & the Hunno-Sarmatian period.

* See Map 9.

These events affected the historical fortunes of the nomads of Central Asia. The third and second centuries B.C. were a long transitional phase for these nomads, marked by major migrations and by the consequent emergence of new groupings of tribes on the historical scene. The movement of the nomads was a constant threat to the security of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. The middle of the third century B.C. saw the rise to power of a group of tribes consisting of the Parni (Aparni) and the Dahae, descendants of the Massagetae of the Aral Sea region. They invaded Parthia, the older Achaemenid satrapy, from the north and took advantage of the weakness of the Seleucids to establish, in 250 B.C., an independent Parthian state under the Arsacid dynasty (see Chapter 5). This powerful nomad state, which lasted from the middle of the third century B.C. to the beginning of the third century A.D., became a dangerous rival of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, the Seleucid state, the Romans and the Kushan Empire. The Arsacids often recruited mercenaries from other nomadic groups, which resulted in a constant replenishment and growth of the nomadic population of the country. Nomad burial grounds investigated at a number of which resulted in a constant replenishment and growth of the nomadic population of the country. Nomad burial grounds investigated at a number of sites in the valleys of the Kopet Dag and Greater Balkhan mountains as well as in the lower hills[1] provide solid evidence of the permanent presence of nomads in northern Parthia, and of the major role they played in the life of that state. They also show that the nomads had maintained their distinctive way of life and culture.

Classical sources knew about the conquest of Bactria by nomadic tribes (see Chapters 4 and 5), referring to them as peoples who came from beyond the Jaxartes (now the Syr Darya). Strabo (XI.8.2) mentions four tribes: the Asii, the Pasiani, the Tochari and the Sacaraucae. Writing of the event which followed, Pompeius Trogus notes briefly that the Asiani, kings of the Tochari, laid waste the Sacaraucae (Justin. *Prologus* XI.I).

Chinese chronicles merely recount the conquest of Bactria by the Yüehchih from Central Asia, whereas other ancient sources mention several invading tribes from beyond the Jaxartes. The juxtaposition of these two contradictory accounts gives rise to the notion of a two-pronged invasion from the north and west. But all attempts to identify the actual invaders have been disputed. Only one thing is beyond doubt concerning this major event in world history. The defeat of the rulers of Bactria was the work of the local nomadic tribes of Transoxania as well as of tribes from northern Central Asia.

The principal sources for the history of these nomads are the *Shih-chi* (Historical Records), by the Han-dynasty court historiographer Szŭ-ma Ch'ien, the *Han-shu* (Annals of the Former Han), the *Hou Han-shu* (Annals of the Later Han) and the *Pei-shih* (Annals

[1] Mandel'shtam, 1971; Marushchenko, 1959.

of the Wei Dynasty).[2] Valuable but very brief references are to be found in the works of ancient historians and geographers, such as Strabo, Ptolemy, Pomponius Mela, etc. The interpretation of these sources continues to be difficult, but the growing volume of archaeological evidence helps to clarify some issues.

The Wu-sun

The Chinese sources tell us of four major groups of nomads: the Wu-sun, the K'ang-chü, the Yen-ts'ai and the Yüeh-chih. The most detailed information available concerns the Wu-sun. The second century B.C. saw the formation of the Wu-sun, a tribal confederation in the north-eastern part of Turkestan (the T'ien Shan mountains) and Semirechye. According to the Chinese sources, the Wu-sun originally lived in Central Asia, together with the tribes of Yüeh-chih and Hsiung-nu. We have the semi-legendary account that when the Wu-sun were defeated by the Yüeh-chih, their leader was killed and some of the Wu- sun, with the new-born son of this leader, obtained the protection of the Hsiung-nu. Later, the Wu-sun, now allied to the Hsiung-nu, invaded T'ien Shan around 160 B.C. and settled down in their newly conquered territories, which became their second homeland. In course of time, when the Wu-sun had become sufficiently powerful, they ceased to obey the Hsiung-nu. In 125 B.C. the Wu-sun were visited by Chang Ch'ien, the famous Chinese traveller and diplomat, who had been sent to establish a coalition against the Hsiung-nu. Chang Ch'ien recommended a plan to deal with the Hsiung-nu. The Chinese were to make peace with the Wu-sun, sealing the compact by marriage. The plan was approved and Chang Ch'ien was sent as ambassador to the Wu-sun in 115 B.C., with the proposal that the Wu-sun should return to their original homeland and attack the Hsiung-nu jointly with the Han. The Wu-sun ruler was offered an alliance and the hand of a Han princess in marriage, but the Wu-sun, wary of the Hsiung-nu, refrained from giving a final answer. After the Han state had achieved considerable military victories in East Turkestan, the Wu-sun finally concluded the marriage alliance with the Han princess; but the Hsiung-nu also sent a princess to marry the lord of the Wu-sun, and she was declared his senior consort, while the Han princess was only his junior wife. The Han bride complained in verse of her destiny, mourning her enforced union with a Wu-sun king whose abode was made out of felt, who ate meat and whose drink was sour milk. In spite of this treatment the next ruler of the Wu-sun was given another Han princess in marriage. After their defeat by the Yüeh-chih and subsequent revenge, the Wu-sun had settled into their new homeland and had become so strong that the Han state felt obliged to win their friendship in an alliance, based on a royal marriage.

[2] Bichurin, 1950; Kyuner, 1961; Chavannes, 1905, p. 519, 1907, p. 149; Hulsewé, 1979.

In the T'ien Shan region the Wu-sun were the first tribal group about which substantial evidence is available. The Chinese sources refer to the Wu-sun or nomad state. The Wu-sun were bounded by the Hsiung-nu to the east, by the settled peoples of East Turkestan to the south, by Ta-yüan (Ferghana) to the south-west and by K'ang-chü to the west. Their federation included locally conquered Saka tribesmen, as well as some Yüeh-chih. The question of the ethnic origin of the Wu-sun themselves remains debatable, and contradictory hypotheses have been advanced. The one thing that is clear is that the majority of the population consisted of linguistically Iranian Saka tribes.

The administrative and political centre of the Wu-sun state was the walled city of Ch'ih-ku, 'the City of the Red Valley', situated in the basin of the Issîk-köl. Lying on one of the branches of the Silk Route, it was also an important trade centre, but its exact location has not yet been established. The principal activity of the Wu-sun was cattle-raising. They freely wandered with their livestock seeking pasture and water, but the geographical conditions in Semirechye and T'ien Shan did not allow constant wandering, and the economy of the Wu-sun remained semi-nomadic, with the population moving from one climatic zone to another with each change of season. They combined cattle-breeding with agriculture, as is evident from archaeological finds of the Wu-sun period from settlements in the Chu valley, the Issîk-köl basin and in eastern Semirechye. These contained the remains of *pisé* dwellings, some with mud floors and other built on stone foundations. Numerous querns and agricultural implements as well as bones of domesticated animals have been found, suggesting a semi-nomadic pastoral economy.

The social structure of the Wu-sun followed the Hsiung-nu pattern. Their ruler was the Great K'un-mo, whose power was hereditary. There was a fairly developed administrative apparatus, consisting of sixteen officials. The ruler was assisted by a council of elders, a body which to some degree limited his power. The Great K'un-mo and his two sons, the rulers of the left and right domains, each commanded a personal force of 10,000 horsemen. There was also a regular army and each freeman was considered as a warrior. The administrators and members of the ruling nobility maintained themselves on the tribute paid to them by conquered tribes, war booty and profits from trading activities. Trophies acquired in wars, which were a frequent occurrence, were at times of quite considerable value. They included large herds of cattle, abundant goods and many prisoners. Most of this booty was shared by the ruling élite and by the privileged warriors of the king's guard, who amassed enormous riches.

The inequitable ownership of livestock and pasture inevitably resulted in the concentration of power in the hands of the wealthiest and largest family within the tribe. This in turn led to social inequality, which is evident from both archaeological finds and written

records. The richest of the Wu-sun owned as many as 4,000 or 5,000 horses, and there is evidence pointing to the privileged use of certain pastures. These factors created dissatisfaction, disputes and popular unrest, especially in the lower strata of Wu-sun society. The accumulation of wealth by the dominant stratum led to social stratification and to relations typical of early class societies, in which the patriarchal-clan order played a major role. A manifestation of this was the widespread application of the custom of the levirate, by which a widow was obliged to remain within the late husband's family, becoming wife to one of his relatives.

Wu-sun society included slaves, most of them prisoners of war. One report says that 10,000 persons were captured in one campaign against the Hsiung-nu. Most slaves laboured as household servants though some worked as craftsmen, but the principal producer was the freeman. The socio-economic structure was similar to that of the Hsiung-nu as an organized community of nomads.

The Wu-sun played the part of a third force between the Hsiung-nu and the Han state. They were attacked around 80 B.C. by the Hsiung-nu and were badly worsted. Their ruler, the reigning K'un-mo, Wu-ku-chi-mi, turned to the Han emperor for assistance and their joint force defeated the Hsiung-nu in 72 B.C., taking numerous prisoners and capturing thousands of horses, cattle, camels and asses. This rich booty greatly strengthened the Wu-sun and gave them great influence over the political life of the settled oases of East Turkestan. The son of Wu-ku-chi-mi became the ruler of Yarkand, while his daughter was given in marriage to the lord of Kucha. The first century B.C. was a period of success and prosperity for them.

Little is known of the Wu-sun during the early centuries of the Christian era. Under pressure from the Ju-jan, a new group of nomadic tribes from Central Asia, the Wu-sun were obliged to abandon Semirechye and seek refuge in the T'ien Shan mountains. The last reference to the Wu-sun in the historical sources is in A.D. 436, when a Chinese diplomatic mission was dispatched to their country and the Wu-sun reciprocated. It is probable that by the middle of the fifth century A.D., the Wu-sun, with other neighbouring peoples, had succumbed to the Hephthalites.

The archaeological sites of the Wu-sun period (Fig. 1) which have been explored in the regions of Semirechye and T'ien Shan are very varied and reflect the ethnic heterogeneity of the population. Most cemeteries are burial grounds with the dead interred in pit-graves[3] of the Chil'pek group. They belong to the local Saka population, which formed part of the Wu-sun federation[4] and preserved the traditions, funeral rites and material culture of

[3] Akishev and Kushaev, 1963; Bernshtam, 1949, 1952; Voevodskiy and Gryaznov, 1938.
[4] Zadneprovskiy, 1971, 1975*b*.



FIG.1. Nomad culture of the Wu-sun period.

the earlier Sakas. A second group consists of kurgans with burials in lined and 'catacomb' chamber graves. Sites of this Aygîrdzhal group are widely found from the first century A.D. and are not basically a local type.[5] For a long time, between the second century B.C. and the fifth century A.D., these graves co-existed with burials of the Chil'pek group, often within the same area, inside the same burial ground. The lined graves and shaft chamber tombs were probably those of the immigrant population, and there is reason to associate lined graves with the Yüeh-chih.

It is clear that the tribesmen who migrated into Turkestan and their descendants spent some 600 years living side by side with the indigenous population, mingling with them to

[5] Akishev and Kushaev, 1963; Zadneprovskiy, 1971, 1975*b*; Kibirov, 1959.

form some kind of unity. Typical of the time are burials in simple grave-pits, which were sometimes covered with logs. The deceased were supplied with a large quantity of utensils, probably containing milk and pieces of mutton. They were buried with their personal adornments and articles of everyday use. Some graves contained gold ornaments, but those of ordinary members of the community were usually poor, with a uniform assortment of grave goods.[6] The graves of the Aygîrdzhal group often contain weapons.

Of particular interest is the Kargali burial of a female shaman discovered in a gorge at an altitude of 2, 300 m, near Alma-Ata, which contained many items of jewellery, clothing and head-dress – a total of nearly 300 gold objects with turquoise inlay. A unique find was a diadem depicting animals, birds and human beings, embellished with settings of carnelian, almandine and turquoise, testifying to the high degree of artistic skill of the ancient jewellers.[7] A rich burial of Wu-sun times at Tenlik in eastern Semirechye contained the grave of a high-ranking warrior whose clothing had been decorated with about 100 skilfully wrought golden bosses. The wide distribution of such rich burials suggests that Wu-sun society was stratified on the basis of property ownership.

The K’ang-chü

The nomadic federation of the K’ang-chü was the second great power after the Yüeh-chih in Transoxania. According to the Chinese sources, K’ang-chü lay north-west of Ta-yüan and west of the Wu-sun, bordering upon the Yüeh-chih to the south. The territory of the K’ang-chü, therefore, covered the region of the Tashkent oasis and part of the territory between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, with its heartland along the middle Syr Darya. It seems to have emerged as a powerful state in the second century B.C. As the historians of Alexander do not refer to the existence of any political confederation on the Jaxartes (Syr Darya) except Chorasmia, the K’ang-chü must have appeared a little later. They united a number of regions which had sedentary, agricultural and nomadic populations.

The K’ang-chü were inevitably affected by the events of the mid-second century B.C., when the Central Asian tribes invaded Graeco-Bactria. The migration of the nomadic peoples (the Asii, Tochari, etc.) to the south altered the balance of power in the valley of the Syr Darya. Taking advantage of these circumstances, as the *Hou Han-shu* suggests, the K’ang-chü subjugated Yen-ts’ai in the region of the Aral Sea, and the still more remote land of the Yen in the southern Urals. Yen-ts’ai is identified with the large confederation

[6] Akishev and Kushaev, 1963; Bernshtam, 1952; Vaynberg, 1981.
[7] Bernshtam, 1940.

of Sarmatian tribes led by the Aorsi.[8] Thus, K’ang-chü established direct contact with the Sarmatian world to the north-west. The expansion of K’ang-chü in this direction in the first and second centuries A.D. was occasioned by the rise of the powerful Yüeh-chih confederacy (subsequently the Kushan Empire) to the south and by the presence in the east of the formidable Wu-sun state allied with the Hsiung-nu and the Han Empire. The Chinese sources inform us that K’ang-chü was tributary to the Yüeh-chih in the south and to the Hsiung-nu in the east. The north-west advance of K’ang-chü and its conquest of Yen-ts’ai apparently obliged some tribes of the Aorsi, and later of the Alans, to move west; it may, therefore, be concluded that K’ang-chü played a major historical role in the initial stages of the Great Migration of Peoples, which was such an important event in world history. In this way, K’ang-chü gained control over the northern sector of the international trade route known as the Northern Route.

In endeavouring to maintain its influence over the southern portion of this route, K’ang-chü pursued an active policy in the east and south-east, allying itself in 101 B.C. with the Ta-yüan, and helping them to preserve their independence against the Han. During the course of its continued struggles against the Wu-sun, K’ang-chü sought assistance from Chih-chih, ruler of the northern Hsiung-nu, in the middle of the first century B.C. Initially Chih-chih’s army penetrated deep into the country of the Wu-sun and besieged their capital in 42 B.C. But the Han state intervened and defeated and killed Chih-chih at Talas in 36 B.C. The K’ang-chü ruler was obliged to send his son as a hostage to the court of the Han emperor as a token of his submission. All these events in the campaign against Chih-chih are related in colourful terms in *The Life History of Ch’eng-t’ang*.[9]

Undaunted, K’ang-chü continued to pursue an independent policy. It maintained its independence up to the end of the third century A.D. and continued to send embassies to the Chinese court. Convincing evidence of its independent status may be seen in the coinage it issued in the second and third centuries. During this period the K’ang-chü rulers at Chach (the Tashkent oasis) began to issue their own currency,[10] similar to some of the early coin issues of ancient Chorasmia. Soon afterwards the fortunes of K’ang-chü declined and it was absorbed into the Hephthalite state – a fate which it shared with the other states of Transoxania.

The *Han-shu* describes the typically nomadic way of life of the K’ang-chü élite and particularly of its sovereign, who spent his winters in the capital, the city of Pi-t’ien, and his summers at his steppe headquarters, situated seven days’ journey away on horseback.

[8] Matsulevich, 1947.
[9] Taskin, 1973.
[10] Buryakov, 1982.



FIG. 2. Nomad culture of South Kazakhstan (third to first century B.C.).

The ruling nucleus of K’ang-chü consisted of nomadic tribes whose customs resembled the Yüeh-chih. Excavations at archaeological sites (Fig. 2) associated with the K’ang-chü nomads reveal their role in the state. In the burials at Berk-kara and Tamdî, the dead were placed in pit-graves, sometimes covered over with logs, under kurgan mounds. The graves contain hand-made pots, iron swords, arrow-heads and some simple jewellery, and belong to K’ang-chü tribes of the early period, their traditional culture exhibiting traits characteristic of the Saka tribes as a whole.

From the beginning of the Christian era, burials in ‘catacomb graves’ (in shaft- and chamber-tombs) became widespread, as we see in the burial grounds of the Kaunchi and Dzhun cultures covering the period from the first to the fourth century and accepted in scholarly literature as the remains of the K’ang-chü tribes.

A considerable level of sophistication distinguished the culture of the settled agriculturalists of K'ang-chü, as we see from brief references in written sources and in archaeological finds such as the burial sites of the Kaunchi and Dzhun cultures of the Tashkent oasis and the middle Syr Darya, of which some seem to belong to the sedentary farming population.

The Yen-ts'ai, Aorsi and Siraci

The third major nomadic state, that of the Yen-ts'ai, was situated in northwestern Central Asia in the steppe around the Aral Sea arid the northern shores of the Caspian, where it was in contact with the world of the Sarmatians. The nomadic population of this region belonged to the Sarmatian group of tribes which replaced the Scythians around the turn of the third century B.C.[11] During the second century B.C. a new major grouping of Sarmatian tribes, of which the chief were the Siraci and Aorsi, appeared on the steppes between the Caspian and the Tanais (the River Don), as Strabo describes. Abeacus, King of the Siraci, could mobilize 20,000 horsemen (at the time when Pharnaces was lord of the Bosporus), while Spadinus, King of the Aorsi, commanded as many as 200,000 and the Upper Aorsi had even more. That explains their camel caravan trade in Indian and Babylonian goods which they procured by barter from the Armenians and the Medes (Strabo XI.5.8).

It is evident from this text that the Aorsi and their kinsmen, the Upper Aorsi, were tribes of Sarmatian origin and were masters of the lands lying along the coast of the Caspian Sea. The precise eastern boundaries of the Aorsi are unknown, but their influence probably extended to the Aral Sea. They were a great military power and for almost three centuries, until the arrival of the Alans, they played a major role in events of the northern Pontic region. King Eunonus of this tribe was an ally of Mithradates VIII (A.D. 40–44) in his struggle against Rome, and offered him asylum after his defeat.

Strabo refers to the established international trade links of the Aorsi with the states of the Caucasus. They also controlled trade routes leading from the Bosporus and other Black Sea states to Transoxania and China. According to Chinese sources, one of the branches of the Silk Route – the Northern Route – passed through East Turkestan, Ta-yüan and K'ang-chü, ending in the country of Yen-ts'ai. Chinese artefacts from archaeological excavations provide concrete evidence of the use of this route during the first few centuries A.D.

Scholars generally identify the Aorsi mentioned by classical writers with the Yen-ts'ai state of the Chinese sources.

[11] Harmatta, 1950.

> The *Shih-chi* states that Yen-ts'ai lies almost 2, 000 li north-west of K'ang-chü, and it is a nomadic country whose customs are like those of K'ang-chü. Its army numbers over 100,000. It lies on a large lake that does not have high banks – the Northern Sca.[12]

This independent nomadic state played a role of some significance in the history of Transoxania and the neighbouring localities along the international trade route. It is not, therefore, surprising that the Han Empire should have sent embassies there and fostered trade relations. Eventually, in the first century B.C., Yen-ts'ai lost its independence and became a dependency of K'ang-chü. According to the *Hou Han-shu*: 'The domain of Yen-ts'ai was renamed A-lan-ya, over which K'ang-chü held sway.'[13] Another country to lose its independence was Yen, which paid tribute in furs. Many scholars seek to identify A-lan-ya (or A-lan-liao) with the Aorsi and Alans of the ancient sources. It should be noted that the appearance of the name A-lan-ya in the *Hou Han-shu* coincides with the emergence of the Alan tribes on the political stage.

The Alans

At the beginning of the first century A.D. the Alans secured a dominant position among the Sarmatians living between the Caspian Sea and the River Don. According to Ammianus Marcellinus, they were descended from the Massagetae. The people of the Alani in the first to third centuries A.D. represented a powerful force with which the Roman Empire was obliged to reckon. They frequently threatened Rome's more remote possessions along the Danube and in Asia Minor, and were successful in penetrating the Caucasus. They also waged successful warfare against Parthia. Historical and archaeological evidence enables us to link Yen-ts'ai (the Aorsi), A-lan-ya (the Alans) and K'ang-chü with the Iranian tribes with whom, as the Chinese chronicles state, they had ties. They had similar dress and identical customs. This cultural affinity can also be traced in burial sites that have been excavated along the lower Volga, in the southern Urals, in the Tashkent oasis and along the middle Syr Darya.

In the Aral region a considerable number of heterogeneous burial sites of the nomads have been discovered. Distinctive circular-plan mausoleums with cruciform interior layouts along the lower reaches of the Syr Darya were places of multiple interconnected burials. The sites in question, Chirik-Rabat, Babîsh-Molla and Balanda, date from the fourth to second century B.C. and were built by the Apasiacae tribes.[14] The Dzhetî-Asar burials in the basin of the Kuvan Darya, a tributary of the Syr Darya, unusual kurgans with round and

[12] Bichurin, 1950; Kyuner, 1961.
[13] Bichurin, 1950; Kyuner, 1961; Hulsewé, 1979.
[14] Tolstov, 1962.

rectangular ground-level chambers built of raw brick, are attributed to Strabo's Tocharoi.[15] Lined kurgans were used for burials by nomads on the left bank of the Amu Darya from the fourth century B.C. The number of such burials increased during the last centuries B.C. and the first two centuries A.D.[16] At a certain stage, a change occurred and the dead were buried with the head pointing south, as in the contemporary Sarmatian burials in the southern Urals. These sites have been tentatively attributed to the Yüeh-chih group of tribes. Similar lined kurgans of the fourth to second centuries B.C. have survived in the south-east part of the Ustyurt plateau in the Aral region, where sites similar to the Late Sarmatian complexes have been discovered.

The complicated palaeo-ethnographic character of nomadic settlement in the Aral Sea region during the period under consideration is thus reflected in the archaeological finds, which show the successive replacement of one group of nomads by another. What needs to be stressed again, however, is the tentative character of all the ethnic (tribal) identifications.

The Hsiung-nu (Hunni, Huns)

An important role in the political history of Central Asia was played by the Hsiung-nu (Hunni or Huns) at the turn of the first century B.C. They were first involved with the affairs of the Wu-sun and the K'ang-chü, but there is hardly any reliable evidence of their presence in the lands where the Wu-sun and K'ang-chü lived. Of particular interest are reports about the small country of Wu-shan-mu,[17] which lay between the lands of these two tribes. Wu-shan-mu had close ties with the Hsiung-nu. Hu-lu-ku, ruler of the Hsiung-nu (96–85 B.C.), arranged a marriage with the family of the ruler of the Wu-shan-mu, establishing blood ties between the two states. In 60 B.C. Ch'i-hou-shan, son of the ruler of the Hsiung-nu, having failed to inherit the throne, fled to the court of his father-in-law in Wu-shan-mu, who played a decisive role in the election of Ch'i-hou-shan to the position of ruler of the Southern Hsiung-nu in 58 B.C., at the time of the division of the Hsiung-nu into two mutually hostile kingdoms. Wu-shan-mu, a minor power, could have played such a role only with the support of a Hsiung-nu military force. As we have seen, the Hsiung-nu first emerged into historical prominence at the beginning of the first century B.C. It was in the year 60 B.C., in connection with the election of Hu-han-yeh as their ruler, that the armed detachment of Chih-chih, leader of the Northern Hsiung-nu (enemies of the Southern Hsiung-nu), appeared in K'ang-chü. Chih-chih entered into an alliance with the

15 Ibid.
16 Vaynberg, 1981; Lokhvits and Khazanov, 1979.
17 Bichurin, 1950.

K'ang-chü against Wu-sun, the lord of K'ang-chü, giving his daughter in marriage to Chih-chih while he himself maried Chih-chih's daughter. Their joint forces then attacked the Wu-sun, reaching the Wu-sun capital in 42 B.C. After so much success, Chih-chih began to demand tribute from Ta-yüan and other kingdoms. But later, when the allies had quarrelled, Chih-chih was attacked and killed by a Chinese force.[18] The Northern Hsiung-nu continued to move south, and their numbers increased considerably following their defeat by Hsien-pi. It is with this mass migration that the emergence of the new Kingdom of Yüeh-pan in the Lake Balkhash region is associated.

The Yüeh-pan

The Chinese chronicle *Pei-shih* informs us that the territory of the Yüeh-pan was formerly a possession of the Hsiung-nu, crushingly defeated by the Chinese. The Northern Hsiung-nu retreated west to K'ang-chü, while part of the local population (some 200,000) remained to form the Kingdom of Yüieh-pan.[19]

In the course of the first century B.C./first century A.D. the Hsiung-nu gradually became masters of the steppe regions north of the Syr Darya. Unlike the Southern Hsiung-nu, who became subjects of the Han emperors, the Northern Hsiung-nu remained independent and grew so powerful that eventually, under Prince Hu-yen (A.D. 123–35), they could establish a vast domain of their own.

Later history

The long occupation of parts of the Central Asian region by numerous Northern Hsiung-nu tribes has left archaeological evidence behind. The finds at Dzhetî-Asar on the Syr Darya include clay pots whose shape closely resembles that of the typical bronze cauldrons of the Hsiung-nu,[20] suggesting, with other remains, the influence of Hsiung-nu culture on the population of Dzhetî-Asar. It could equally be suggested that these tribes formed part of the peoples known as the White Huns, or Hephthalites.[21] 'Catacomb' (shaft-and-chamber) tombs dated between the first and fourth centuries A.D. have been excavated at the burial ground of Kenkol (Fig. 3) in the Talas valley.[22] The dead were placed in wooden coffins and their grave goods included weapons and a bow of distinctive Hsiung-nu type with bone arrow-heads and wooden vessels. All these material objects were typical of the

18 Taskin, 1973.
19 Bichurin, 1950.
20 Levina, 1966.
21 Tolstov, 1962.
22 Bernshtam, 1951; Kozhomberdiev, 1963; Sorokin, 1956*a*.

Hsiung-nu[23] while the earthen pots and articles of everyday use were the work of local tribes. The actual form of the grave structure was different from the common Hsiung-nu types and the people buried at Kenkol were of two distinct racial types. The majority turned out to be of the Pamir-Ferghana Europoid type. Others were Europoids, albeit with a significant Mongoloid admixture.[24] The ethnic (tribal) identification of Kenkol is a matter of controversy. Some scholars attribute it to the Hsiung-nu and others to local tribes.[25] Since Kenkol is situated in the Talas valley, in the eastern part of what was once K'ang-chü,



FIG. 3. The Kenkol culture.

[23] Bernshtam, 1951; Mandel'shtam, 1975*a*.
[24] Ginzburg and Trofimova, 1972.
[25] Bernshtam, 1951; Kozhomberdiev, 1963; Harmatta, 1952.



FIG. 4. Nomad culture of south kazakhstan and the Tashkent oasis (first to fourth century A.D.).

there are reasons for taking it to be a K'ang-chü site which reflects Hsiung-nu influence on the local K'ang-chü populace.

A similar pattern emerges with the kurgans (Fig. 4) in the area of Char-dara along the middle Syr Darya. One of the local graves contained a bronze cauldron and earthenware pots similar to those of the Hsiung-nu.[26] Here too, however, the majority of the people were of K'ang-chü stock. It may be noted, in conclusion, that the nomad tribes of the Yüeh-chih, who constituted the most powerful force in Transoxania in the second and first centuries B.C., played a specific and decisive role in the emergence of one of the most formidable powers of the ancient world, the Kushan Empire. The burial grounds excavated in northern

[26] Maksimova et al., 1968.

Bactria – Tulkhar, Aruktau, Kokkum and Babashi[27] – seem to have belonged to the Yüeh-chih, and similar nomad burial sites explored in T'ien Shan,[28] Semirechye,[29] Sogdiana[30] and Ferghana[31] can reasonably be used as evidence for the southward migration of the Yüeh-chih tribes towards Bactria and India.[32]

These historical and archaeological data shed interesting light on the role of the Transoxanian nomads in the history of both Central Asia itself and the world at large. It was as a direct result of their enterprise and warlike activities that the new strong states of Parthia and the Kushans, the major powers of K'ang-chü, Wu-sun and later the Hephthalite Empire emerged. The nomads of Central Asia also played a key role in the Great Migration of Peoples. They contributed much to the interchange of cultural achievements between the civilizations of the ancient world and equally exercised considerable influence on the development of the sedentary cultures of the East, especially in matters of warfare and the arts. The Central Asian nomads of antiquity did indeed leave their indelible mark on history.

27 Mandel'shtam, 1975*b*.
28 Bernshtam, 1952; Kibirov, 1959.
29 Akishev and Kushaev, 1963; Bernshtam, 1951.
30 Obel'chenko, 1961.
31 Baruzdin, 1962; Kozhomberdiev, 1977; Lokhvits and Khazanov, 1979.
32 Zadneprovskiy, 1975*a*.

20

THE RISE OF SASANIAN IRAN

B. A. Litvinsky, M. Hussain Shah and R. Shabani Samghabadi

Contents

The decline of Parthia

Parthia was one of the great empires of the ancient world, a rival of the Roman Empire and the Kushan kingdom. But by the beginning of the second century A.D. all that was a thing of the past. The last hundred years in the life of Parthia was a period appropriately described as the 'downfall of the Parthian Empire'.[1] The period began with the reign of Vologases II, who ruled until A.D. 146/7.[2] At that time, the Parthian state was anything but unified; in particular, to judge from the numismatic evidence, Iran was at that time under the rule of his rival, Mithradates IV (*c.* A.D. 130–47). Parthia was also weakened by its conflict with the Alani (*c.* 136). During the war between the two peoples, a Parthian army of 20,000 foot-soldiers had fallen into a trap and were only saved by heroic fighting. Nevertheless, the Parthians were forced to retreat and this left the way into Mesopotamia open for the

[1] Debevoise, 1938, pp. 240 et seq.
[2] Here and elsewhere, Litvinsky adheres to the system of Late Parthian genealogy and chronology suggested by Bivar, 1983*b*, pp. 92–9; see also Sellwood, 1967.

Romans. Had the Alani not been attacked simultaneously by another people, the Parthians would have been annihilated.[3]

Then began the long reign of Vologases III (A.D. 147/8–190/1). At first, relations with Rome under Antoninus Pius were comparatively peaceful. It was only after the emperor Marcus Aurelius came to power that a new round of wars began between Parthia and Rome. Initially, good fortune was on the side of the Parthians. They captured Edessa and invaded Syria, where their detachments wreaked havoc and destruction, but then the Romans took the initiative. Their army invaded Armenia and Mesopotamia. After a bloody siege, Dura-Europos fell. This was followed by the capture of Seleucia, which was burnt to the ground during an uprising of its inhabitants. The Parthian capital Ctesiphon was taken, and the palace of Vologases was destroyed (Dio Cassius LXXI.2.3; Lucian, *Bis accusatus* 2). In the view of present-day scholars, the defeats of the Parthians were to a large extent due to an epidemic of smallpox that was raging at that time. It seems to have begun in Southern Asia, spread to China, and then taken hold of the Kushan Empire, possibly during the reign of Kanishka. Afterwards, it spread along the Silk Route to the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. In A.D. 165 Roman detachments entering Ctesiphon picked up the disease, which then spread into the Roman Empire.[4] Evidence of the scale of the epidemic can be seen in the fact that in some parts of the Roman Empire over a quarter of the urban population was wiped out.[5]

This, however, did not prevent the Roman armies from continuing their victorious campaign against Parthia. Osroes, the Parthian general, was saved by swimming across the Tigris. Vologases III was replaced by Vologases IV (A.D. 191), who was in turn succeeded by his son, Vologases V (A.D. 207/8–221/2). The Romans controlled a large part of Mesopotamia; Armenia and Osroene were turned into Roman provinces; the territory west of the Khabur river remained a permanent part of the Roman Empire; and Carrhae and Edessa were also in the Roman sphere of influence. There were repeated uprisings in Parthia by local rulers who were bent on achieving independence. A major uprising occurred in A.D. 196 when the royal forces were surrounded by the insurgents in a valley in Khorasan and forced to flee to the mountains, where they lost many soldiers and a considerable amount of equipment. Reorganizing their forces, the royal troops put down the insurgents but paid a heavy price. The Parthian kingdom was now rent by internal divisions: the king's brother, Artabanus V (Ardavān in Middle Persian), emerged as an independent ruler between approximately 213 and 224. His rule was centred on Media, and from there he mounted his campaigns into the neighbouring provinces. His principal success was the

[3] Debevoise, 1938, pp. 242–3.
[4] Bivar, 1970, pp. 19–21.
[5] Bivar, 1983*b*, p. 94.

capture of Susa where, in 215, he ruled as a king assisted by Xwāsak as governor.[6] In 216 the Roman emperor Caracalla perfidiously attacked the troops of Artabanus V (who managed to escape capture), destroyed a large part of Media, and had the graves of the Parthian kings dug up and their bones scattered (Dio Cassius LXXVIII, pp. 1 et seq.). And although two years later the Parthians in turn were victorious, the years of the Parthian kingdom were numbered.

Under Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138–61), Hyrcanian and Bactrian ambassadors arrived in Rome and probably engaged in negotiations directed against Parthia. It is possible that by that time Hyrcania was no longer dependent on the central government of Parthia (Sextus Aurelius Victor, *Epitome* 15.7). Iranshahr then consisted of small domains, only nominally subordinate (and sometimes not even that) to a central ruler. At the head of the state stood the 'King of Kings'. His personal domain covered only a very small part of the Parthian state – ancient Media and the adjacent lands. Over these he reigned supreme. Within his domain there were small provinces or *patkōs* (administered by a *patkōspān*) and towns with surrounding districts administered by officials with the title of *ḥštrp* = *xšahrap*. The capital was also located here. Beside the royal domain there was a whole system of semi-independent or virtually independent domains (*ḥštr* = *xšahr*), each ruled over by a king (*MLK*' or *ḥštrdr*) who was usually the representative of a local hereditary dynasty. These domains, in turn, were made up of smaller estates.[7]

The structural instability of the Parthian kingdom became even more pronounced in the second and early third centuries A.D. and led to the development of centrifugal tendencies that were exacerbated by the relentless attacks of Rome in the West and the pressure of the Kushan Empire in the East. All this led to economic stagnation. Parthia's public and social life also suffered from the same sort of problems – the crisis of a slaveholding society – that beset the countries of the Mediterranean in the second and third centuries A.D.; the imbalance in the social structure of its society was probably a major element in the ultimate fall of the Parthian Empire. At the beginning of the third century, the state had largely disintegrated and the downfall of Parthia was imminent.

The new Sasanian dynasty

The birth of the new Sasanian dynasty and, more important, the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Iran were linked with Pārs (called Persis by the Greek authors), [8] the small

[6] Henning, 1952, p. 176; Bivar, 1983*b*, p. 95.
[7] Widengren, 1956; Harmatta, 1957, 1958; Lukonin, 1961.
[8] D'yakonov, 1961, pp. 230–1.

state in the south-west of the Iranian uplands (= modern Fars). There are several versions of the events surrounding the origin of the Sasanians.[9] The sources tell us almost nothing about the history of Pārs itself during the first centuries of the Christian era. King Papak, who usurped the crown of the Pārs rulers, played a major role in unifying the land.[10] He apparently had to wage a difficult struggle against the central Parthian government. Shortly after Papak's death, his adopted son Ardashir became King of Pārs (*c.* A.D. 216). According to one group of sources, he was a descendant of Sasan, and this gave the Sasanian dynasty its name.

Ardashir organized a coalition that annihilated the Parthian army at the battle of Hormizdagan, where the last Parthian ruler, Artabanus V (Ardavān), was killed. The exact date is not known. Depending on the computation system used, Artabanus' death occurred in either 223 or 226, and Ardashir ascended to the throne in either 224 or 227 (Fig. 1). But that was only the beginning. Ardashir then had to overcome the resistance of the rulers of many provinces before he finally united the whole of Iran under his authority, and placed members of the royal family in charge of different parts of the country. One of his sons, called Ardashir, was installed in the province of Kerman. At the same time many of the former leading aristocratic families retained their power, as the royal Sasanian inscriptions show. King Ardashir brought under his control a large number of Mesopotamian principalities in the west up to the borders of the Roman Empire in Syria and Asia Minor. He seems to have established the Arabian principality of the Lakhmids at Al-Hira, which protected Mesopotamia from the raids of the nomadic Arabs.

> Tabari describes Ardashir's conquests in the east as follows:
>
> He then left Sawād for Istakhr, thence went first to Sistan and then to Gurgan, Abarshahr, Merv, Balkh, and Khwārizm, right up to the very borders of the country of Khorasan, whence he again returned to Merv. After he had killed many people and sent their heads to the Anahid Temple of Fire, he returned to Pārs from Merv and settled there again. The ambassadors of the kings of Kushan and of Turān and Mukrān came there and paid homage to him.

Nöldeke, who published this text, suggested that it contained many exaggerations, [11] but Herzfeld produced evidence substantiating its reliability and authenticity.[12] This tallies with the conclusions reached by other scholars, such as Maricq, [13] Ghirshman[14] and Harmatta.[15] Reviewing the events that occurred in the second half of Ardashir's reign,

[9] Lukonin, 1961, pp. 12–15; Christensen, 1944; Taqizadeh, 1943–46.
[10] Tabari, 1879, pp. 6–7
[11] Tabari, 1879, pp. 17–18, nn. 3–5.
[12] Herzfeld, 1924, pp. 36 et seq.
[13] Maricq, 1953, pp. 106 et seq.
[14] Ghirshman, 1947.
[15] Harmatta, 1965, p. 190.

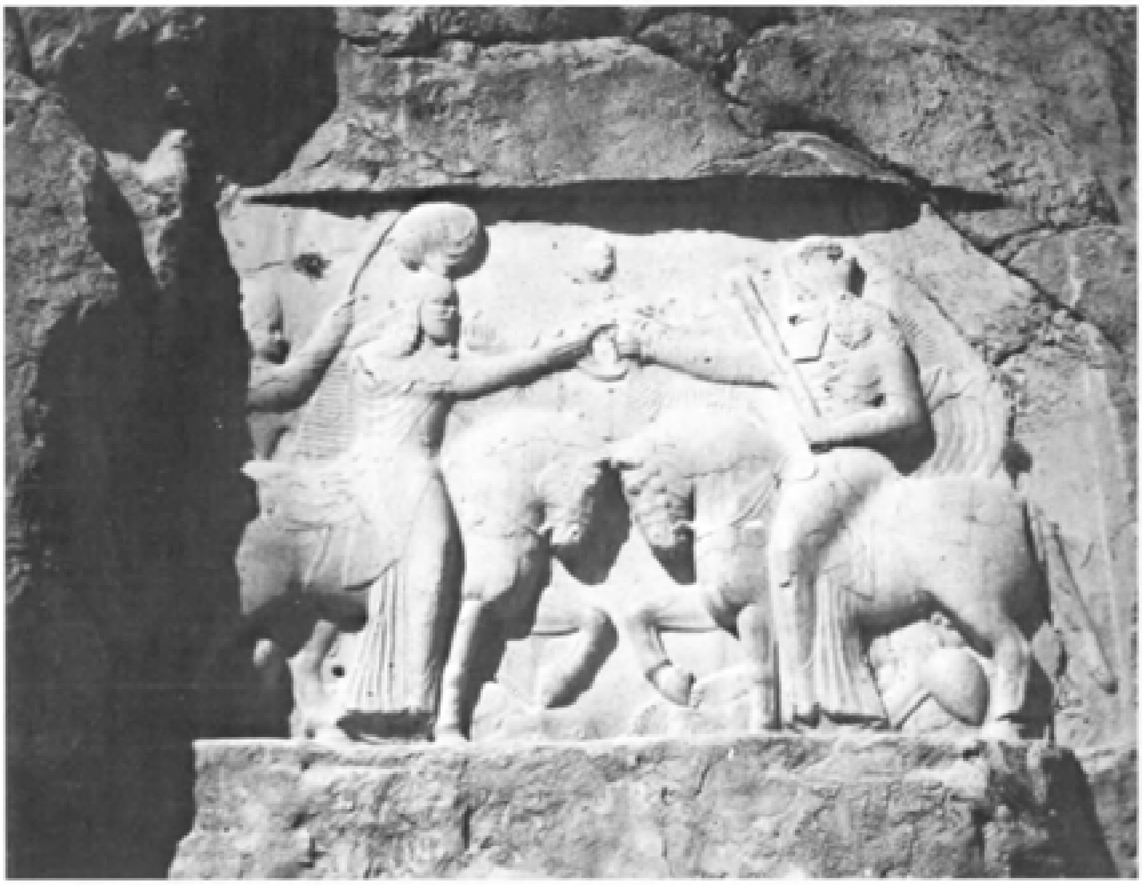


FIG. 1. Naqsh-i Rustam. The investiture of Ardashir I. (Photo: UNESCO/Almasy.)

around A.D. 232, Harmatta concluded that Tabari's report reviewed the campaigns of Ardashir from the political and strategic points of view in such a convincing order that its correctness as a whole can hardly be doubted.

On the other hand, serious doubts have been expressed about the reliability of Tabari's account by other scholars.[16] Tabari's facts about the campaigns, which are corroborated by Moses of Khorene (Movses Xorenac'i), apparently merit credence, but we do not know how serious the consequences were. There is no doubt that Merv was captured and that Ardashir, the King of Kings, installed either his brother or son, also named Ardashir, on the throne there. Frye[17] concludes that we can only speculate that Merv was the outpost of the empire in the north-east since neither Sogdiana nor Khwārizm (ancient Chorasmia) are mentioned in any source as ruled by Ardashir. It should be added, as Harmatta noted, that the Kushan kingdom could have also recognized (perhaps nominally) the suzerainty of the powerful Sasanian King of Kings.

[16] Tabari, 1879; Lukonin, 1969b, pp. 22–7.
[17] Frye, 1983, p. 124.

The campaigns of Shapur I

After Ardashir's death, his son Shapur I ascended the throne; his reign began in the year A.D. 239 or 241 and ended in 270 or 273 (the period of his reign is usually given as 242–72). Under Shapur, there was a serious dispute with the Roman Empire. Rome viewed the new Sasanian state as a dangerous enemy and tried to take the initiative, but in 244 Shapur routed the Roman army on the Euphrates. The Roman emperor Gordian fell in battle or was killed by his own troops; the town near the scene of the battle was given the name of Pērōz-Šāpūr, or 'Victorious is Shapur'; and the Romans paid a tribute of 500,000 gold dinars. Other wars with the Romans ensued and resulted in the Sasanian capture of Syria and part of Asia Minor. In the battle at Edessa (260), the Roman emperor Valerian was taken prisoner along with his army (Fig. 2). The details of the battle are unknown, but in its wake the Iranian army captured thirty-six towns and fortresses.[18] Never before had the Roman army suffered such a defeat. Shapur's victories in the west demonstrated the power and stability of the young state. In battle, Shapur I showed himself to be a brilliant strategist, an intelligent and bold statesman.[19] In honour of his victory, temples were built and rock reliefs carved. By his defeat of the Romans, Shapur I was able to gain a firm foothold in Armenia and Georgia. He also conducted an active policy in the east, winning a number of victories there (see below), and took the title of 'King of kings of Iran and non-Iran'.



FIG. 2. Naqsh-i Rustam. The victory of Shapur I over the Roman emperor Valerian. (Photo: UNESCO/Malval.)

[18] Nöldeke, 1887, p. 93.
[19] Lukonin, 1969*a*, p. 59.

On his death in A.D. 270, Shapur was succeeded in turn by Hormizd (270–71), Bahram I (271–74), Bahram II (274–93), Bahram III (293) and Narseh (293–302).[20] By then the position had changed. Iran had suffered setbacks in its foreign policy in the west, and Rome had consolidated its power and influence in the east. Shapur I was an outstanding ruler. Apart from his personal qualities as diplomat and general, he played a major role in strengthening and consolidating the new Sasanian state. He initiated a series of appropriate changes in social and economic structures, which still bore a feudalistic imprint. There was a marked expansion of the royal domains and many local dynasties were supplanted by members of the Sasanian royal family. The state was substantially centralized, a process that considerably enhanced its economic and military power. At this period Zoroastrianism was made the state religion and its priests and temples became the mainstays of state authority.[21]

Kushanshahr

Shapur's conquests in the east are worthy of special mention. They followed up the military activities of Ardashir discussed above. The *Arbela Chronicle* describes one of Shapur's campaigns against the Chorasmians, the mountain tribes of Media and Atropatene (Azerbaijan) and other eastern tribes (the Gilanians, the Dailamits) in the very first year of his reign. Shapur is credited with the founding of the town of Nēv-Šāpūr (medieval Nishapur).[22] But what is most significant is the passage in the inscription on the Ka[c]be of Zoroaster at Naqsh-i Rustam which relates that among other provinces (*šahr*) Ērānšahr included 'Kušānšahr forward up to Pškbwr and to the border of Kāš, Sugd and Čāč'. Pškbwr, or Puruṣapura (Peshawar), was the capital of Gandhāra.[23] Preceding the enumeration of the provinces (including Kushanshahr) in the inscription are the words 'I possess', and following the enumeration the sentence 'They all paid us tribute and were subject to us.' This gave rise to a major debate, [24] with several scholars, for a variety of reasons, refuting or expressing doubt about the claim that Shapur I had conquered Kushanshahr.[25] The campaign itself possibly took place between 245 and 248. The inscription of Narseh in Paikuli (*c*. 293) mentions 'Kušānšah'. Apparently between the years 330 and 340 the

[20] We use the chronology proposed by Frye, 1983, p. 178. On the history, see Lukonin, 1979.
[21] Lukonin, 1969*a*, pp. 62–90.
[22] Markwart, 1931, pp. 12, 52.
[23] Harmatta, 1969.
[24] Lukonin vigorously contested the authenticity of the information about Shapur's inscription on the Ka'be of Zoroaster. However, his arguments were convincingly refuted by Harmatta (1969, pp. 385, 486–90). See also Livshits, 1969, p. 56 and Gafurov, 1972, pp. 153–4.
[25] For a new rendering of this passage of the inscription by P. O. Skjaervoe, see Göbl, 1984, p. 173, n. 131.

Kushan lands in the northern part of the Kushan Empire were under the suzerainty of the Sasanians, but we know nothing about the form of this dependence. Henning was inclined to the view that one of the Middle Persian inscriptions of visitors at ancient Termez dated back to the year 264/5.[26]

On the eve of Ardashir's conquest (230), the Kushan kingdom, according, to Chinese sources, covered a vast territory. The *Wei Lio* (History of the Wei Dynasty) informs us that the Kingdom of Kabul (Kao-fu) and the Kingdom of India (T'ien-chou) were both dependencies of the Ta-Yüeh-chih.[27] What then became of the Kushan Empire after the Sasanian conquests in the east? According to one hypothesis, formulated in an exceedingly rigorous manner by Harmatta, Ardashir mounted his campaign at a date (which Harmatta calculated as A.D. 233) when the Kushan kingdom was weakened by being divided into two parts, one ruled by Vāsudeva II, the other by Kanishka III. This marks the beginning of the Late Kushan era, which was also used in the Tochi valley inscriptions. For a number of reasons, Harmatta[28] suggests that it was Vāsudeva II who submitted following Ardashir's successful invasion, and that, consequently, it was Vāsudeva II who ruled the western part of the Kushan Empire (later Kushanshahr) while Kanishka III ruled the eastern part (Gandhāra and the Panjab). Harmatta's position is highly consistent and carefully argued. It is shared by other scholars, among them Bivar.[29] However, the situation is not as simple as this might suggest. First the question of terminology must be clarified. The existence of a separate ruler (Vāsudeva II) is called into question by several scholars. One view is that there was only one Vāsudeva, whose coin type was changed in successive issues.[30] Kanishka III is called Kanishka II by other researchers.[31] Zeimal also recognized that the supposed synchronism between the coins of Vāsudeva II and Kanishka III presupposes that they ruled at the same time, although apparently over a different territory; in other words, at some point during the first half of Vāsudeva's reign the Kushan kingdom was divided in two.[32] However, Zeimal, like Göbl, dates the reign of these kings to a much later period, a century or more after the campaign of Ardashir I. So long as there is no scientific certainty about the exact dates of the Kushan kings, this, too, will remain an open question, even though Harmatta's position is very attractive. Numismatic maps and statistics do not provide sufficient evidence to allow us to settle the question of the boundaries between these two parts of the Kushan state, or two Kushan states (see also Volume III, Chapter 7).

26 Quoted in Livshits, 1969, p. 46, n. 24.
27 Chavannes, 1905, pp. 538 et seq.
28 Harmatta, 1969, pp. 365–87.
29 Bivar, 1983a, pp. 203–4.
30 Zeimal, 1983, pp. 215–17.
31 Göbl, 1984, pp. 75 et seq.
32 Zeimal, 1983, p. 225.

Margiana

Margiana (the Merv oasis)[33] and Bactria occupied a special place in the conflict between the Kushans and the Sasanians. By the beginning of the third century A.D., the states of southern Mesopotamia and the provinces of eastern Iran – Margiana, Segistan (Sistan) and Kerman – were virtually independent states, governed by local dynasties which only formally recognized their dependence on the Arsacids.[34] Already as early as the first century A.D. the rulers of Margiana minted their own bronze coins, copying the types of the Arsacid silver drachms. A few of these coins bore the name of the local ruler, King Sanabares.[35]

In the second decade of the third century, when the new Sasanian dynasty of Persis marched against the Arsacids, the rulers of the eastern Iranian provinces, including the dynasty of Margiana, apparently supported Ardashir I in his struggle against the last Arsacid, Artabanus V.[36] By A.D. 230, Ardashir controlled a great part of the former Parthian territories. The rulers of Merv voluntarily recognized the suzerainty of the Sasanians while preserving for a time a certain degree of autonomy. In the list of court officials of Ardashir I forming part of the inscription on the Ka^{c}be of Zoroaster, Ardashir's name and the names of the King of Merv and other kings of the eastern Iranian provinces headed the list.[37] Between 240 and 260, the Merv ruler minted in his own name a bronze coin with the figure of a horseman and the Pahlavi inscription *mlwy MLK*'.[38]

Around 260, during the reign of Shapur I (A.D. 243–72), the dynasty of the Merv kings was abolished. The King of Merv is no longer mentioned on the list of Shapur's court officials of this *šāhanšāh* found in the inscription on the Ka^{c}be of Zoroaster.[39] Margiana became part of the administrative province that was given the name of 'Hind, Sagistān and Turistān to the sea coast' and was ruled by members of the Sasanian family, sons and brothers of the Sasanian king. The first ruler of this province was Narseh, the son of Shapur I. The succession of rulers of the eastern Iranian provinces can be traced up to the beginning of the fourth century.[40] Merv was an integral part of the Sasanian state; during this period it issued copper coins and, to a lesser extent, silver of the same types as those minted by the Sasanian state.

[33] Numismatic and archaeological material (including unpublished material) on the Merv oasis has been presented by A. B. Nikitin.
[34] Lukonin, 1969*a*, p. 36.
[35] Pilipko, 1980, p. 117.
[36] Lukonin, 1969*a*, p. 38.
[37] Ibid., p. 39.
[38] Loginov and Nikitin, 1986.
[39] Lukonin, 1969*a*, p. 62.
[40] Lukonin, 1979, p. 13.

Between the third and fifth centuries, the capital of the Merv oasis was still the ancient Antioch in Margiana, the present-day site of Gyaur-kala, near Old Merv. At the fortified site of the ancient town, which covers an area of over 4 km^2 studies have been carried out on the citadel (Erk-kala) of which the oldest part belongs to the third-century keep (Fig. 3), [41] the fortifications, the living and workshop quarters in the northern section, [42] the Buddhist religious building complex, [43] a Christian monastery which was probably functioning from the third century, [44] and finally a necropolis located outside the limits, which was used from the second century until the end of the Sasanian period.[45]

Under the first Sasanians the oasis fortresses that had been built in the previous period – Chil'burdzh, Durnali, Chichanlîk, Kîrk-depe – were strengthened and reconstructed.[46] As a rule, no buildings were located within the fortresses. Settlements grew up round the walls, some remaining until Muslim times. Each fortress was used to quarter the troops who defended a particular sector of the oasis. The construction of most of these fortifications (depe or tepe) dates back to the Early Sasanian period. They were erected on high adobe platforms alongside the settlements. Of unusual design was the Gebeklî-depe fortress, guarding the approach to the north-west limit of the oasis. The citadel platform was enclosed by a second fortification with towers at each corner. Excavations revealed the



FIG. 3. Old Merv. The citadel. (Courtesy of I. Iskender-Mochiri.)

41 Usmanova, 1963, pp. 33 et seq.
42 Katsuris and Buryakov, 1963.
43 Usmanova and Dresvyanskaya, 1976, p. 553; Papakhristu and Usmanova, 1978, p. 548.
44 Dresvyanskaya, 1974.
45 Ershov, 1959; Obel'chenko, 1969.
46 Koshelenko, 1977, pp. 42–3; Pugachenkova, 1958.

presence of earlier fortifications of the Parthian period, though the coins found show that most of the work was erected during the reign of Shapur I.

Margiana was an ancient agricultural oasis in the delta of the Murghab and was irrigated by its waters. The location of monuments from the Bronze and Early Iron Ages shows that the boundaries of the lands under irrigation gradually shifted southward. In antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, Margiana was the site of a complex system of canals fed by tributaries of the Murghab. It did not possess its own ore deposits, but imported the raw material for its local metallurgical production from mines in northern Iran.[47] Iron blooms were discovered in many settlements and an arms workshop dating to Early Sasanian times was found in Old Merv itself. Plutarch mentions Margiana's steel, which was used to make armour for Parthian soldiers. Pottery production was highly developed, and potters occupied a whole quarter in Old Merv. Kilns of the Parthian period were discovered in Dzhin-depe, [48] and pottery workshops operated in many towns and settlements. Pottery of the Late Parthian and Early Sasanian period differed little in shape, although there were some changes in production techniques.[49] Among other objects found were spindle whorls and loom weights. From ancient times the inhabitants of Margiana were Mazdeans. In the third and fourth centuries, their religious beliefs were gradually transformed under the influence of the orthodox Zoroastrianism of the Sasanian Empire, and this was reflected in a change of burial rites. The burial of bodies, which was the normal practice in the Parthian period, was supplanted by the burying of bones.[50] Local Mazdean practices are undoubtedly responsible for the terracotta statuettes of the Margiana goddess, the goddess of fertility, which have been found in great profusion in Merv.[51] According to al-Biruni, Christianity had reached Merv within 200 years of the birth of Christ and the first reference to a Merv bishopric dates to the year 334.[52] From the middle of the third century a Manichaean community existed there.[53] Still earlier, possibly in the second century, Buddhism appeared, [54] and the third and fourth centuries witnessed the development of a complex of Buddhist buildings on the site of the ancient town of Gyaur-kala.[55]

At Merv, the beginning of the Sasanian period can be regarded as a time of relative economic advance, compared with the Late Parthian period (contrary to the view previously

47 Koshelenko, 1977, p. 35.
48 Merezhin, 1962.
49 Rutkovskaya, 1962, pp. 67 et seq.
50 Koshelenko, 1977.
51 Pugachenkova, 1962, pp. 118 et seq.
52 al-Biruni, 1957, p. 330; Nikitin, 1984, p. 123.
53 Lukonin, 1969*a*, p. 77.
54 Koshelenko, 1966, p. 175.
55 Usmanova, 1975, p. 530.

held). Economic growth was fostered by the oasis having become firmly part of Sasanian territory and by Merv's increasing importance as a military outpost and trade centre resulting from the conquests in the east and the development of international trade.

Bactria and the Silk Route

The second and third centuries were also a time of noteworthy achievement for the culture of Bactria. During this period the country consisted of towns, including the important cities of Balkh and Termez, and rural settlements (roughly in the ratio of one to seven). The rural settlements also included the nomadic population. Bactria had a wide range of rich temples and other places of worship for various religions. Its art and architecture had a distinctive character and had reached a high stage of development.[56]

The Silk Route (see Map 5) continued to be extensively used, as evidenced by the written sources, [57] as well as archaeological discoveries in China proper, East Turkestan, Central Asia and Afghanistan. But the conquest of the western part of the Kushan Empire by Ardashir, the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, caused some difficulties in the traffic and in the silk trade in the north between Sogdiana and Kushanshahr, as a vassal kingdom now belonging to the Sasanian Empire, and in the south between Iran and Gandhāra

Consequently Indian and Sogdian merchants, keeping away from Sasanian Kushanshahr, made efforts to reorganize the silk trade and looked for a new route leading from the eastern Kushan kingdom across Gilgit and the Karakorum range to the Pamirs, Sogdiana and Chinese Turkestan. Interesting testimony for the use of this route for the silk trade is seen in the inscriptions engraved by Sogdian merchants on the rocks at Thor and the Shatial Bridge (see Chapter 17).

[56] Staviskiy, 1977; Pugachenkova et al., 1978; Pugachenkova, 1979; Kruglikova, 1974; Kruglikova and Pugachenkova, 1977; Litvinskiy and Sedov, 1983, 1984; Litvinskiy, 1968; Schlumberger et al., 1983.
[57] Herrmann, 1938, p. 2.

CONCLUSION

J. Harmatta

Between 700 B.C. and A.D. 250, the development of the civilizations of Central Asia was mainly determined by two factors. One was the rise of nomadic animal husbandry and the appearance of equestrian nomads; the other was represented by the growth of agriculture, craftsmanship and urbanization. Originally, the Iranian tribes pursued both stock-breeding and tillage. Before the invention of the two- and four-wheeled vehicle and the war-chariot, that is, during the first wave of their mass migration towards the east and the south, their culture was fairly uniform. But the invention of riding made it possible to drive great herds of cattle and horses and immensely facilitated long-distance traffic. The northern Iranian tribes took possession of the vast steppe zone of Asia. Abandoning sedentary life, they became nomadic herdsmen. Looking for grass and water, they constantly wandered over the pastures – as both Greek and Chinese authors agree when characterizing their way of life.

These Iranian equestrian nomads created a highly developed nomadic civilization, all the elements of which were adapted to nomadic stock-breeding. Stable settlements were replaced by mobile nomadic camps. Instead of adobe houses they constructed yurts – tents with a light wooden structure, covered with skin or felt, which could easily be assembled and taken down. The Iranian nomads developed the high-wheeled light nomadic vehicle and perfected the crafts connected with horse trappings, harness, saddles and arms, in particular the bow-and-arrow and both human and equestrian mail. Their diet was rich in animal protein, but they were permanently short of cereals. The driving and grazing of great herds of cattle, horse and sheep required a strong social organization of military type. The nomadic rotation of pastures between two climatic zones and the distribution of grazing grounds between tribes necessitated the creation of broader political units. Thus, great tribal confederations of Iranian nomads were formed, which in some cases developed into nomadic states. During the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. several nomadic states of northern Iranian tribes came into being in Central Asia. In the west some Saka tribal

confederations are mentioned in ancient Greek literature and Old Persian inscriptions, while in the east the Hsien-yün, and later the Yüeh-chih and the Hsiung-nu, tribal confederations are attested by the Chinese sources.

The extremely rich tombs of nomad kings excavated at Arzhan and Pazîrîk clearly point to the accumulation of great wealth and the concentration of power in their hands. Lively contacts and easy communications promoted the rise and spread of a fairly uniform nomadic culture in the steppe zone. The same types of horse-harness (bridle, bit, cheek-piece, saddle, trappings), arms (bow, bow-case, arrow and quiver, sword, battle-axe, mail) and garments (trousers, caftan, waist-girdle, boots, pointed cap) were used in the steppe zone from Central Europe to Korea. The Iranian nomads had plenty of livestock, transport and animal products but lacked agricultural products and handicrafts. They constantly tried to obtain the articles they lacked by barter or by force from neighbouring sedentary peoples, and this caused recurrent instability on their borders.

The Iranian tribes who advanced towards the south met a well-developed sedentary civilization. It had a state organization and fortified cities with handicrafts at a high level, productive agriculture based on irrigation, long-distance trade in mineral resources and agricultural products. It made extensive use of written records and had a rich oral and written literature. The immigrating Iranians had already formed tribal confederations. Adopting many elements of the sedentary civilization, they quickly developed their own state organizations and founded kingdoms in Media, Persia, Bactria, Chorasmia, and perhaps Arachosia. They retained their independence of each other for a century, but eventually Media gained the ascendancy, and almost all the southern Iranian tribes were united for the first time under the Medes. In the middle of the sixth century B.C. the Medes were replaced by the Persians, who enlarged their territory to include nearly all the well-developed lands of ancient sedentary civilizations from the Aegean to the River Indus and from Ethiopia to the River Syr Darya.

In extending its frontiers up to the Syr Darya, the Persian Empire annexed part of the steppe zone with several nomadic tribal confederations (Sakā Haumavargā, Sakā Tigraxaudā). There was, therefore, permanent contact between the Iranian nomads and the sedentary Iranian population during the whole of the Old Persian period. In Central Asia, the Achaemenid kings established a well-organized administration, built fortified cities and satrapal centres. They constructed military roads and promoted agriculture with irrigation. They also employed Iranian nomads as cavalrymen in the army and settled them as military colonists. Saka armament, harness and warfare had a clear effect on the Old Persian army. At the same time, Old Persian culture, incorporating the best elements of earlier civilizations in the ancient Near East, had an influence far beyond the northern frontiers of

the empire, as the finds in the burials of the nomad kings at Pazîrîk show. After the wars of Cyrus and Darius I against the Iranian nomads, contacts were peaceful on the northern frontiers until the invasion of Alexander the Great.

The Achaemenids also extended their supremacy over Asia Minor, the Greek islands and the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. This was a very important event because it now became possible for the first time, at least within the limits of the Old Persian Empire, for the peoples of Central Asia to come into contact with Greek Mediterranean cultures.

Commodity production and money economy were better developed in the Greek city-states. Greek coins consequently circulated widely in the eastern satrapies of the Achaemenid kings. From an economic viewpoint, the Greeks had conquered Iran long before the army of Alexander the Great crossed the Bosporus. The process was accelerated when the Persians began to hire Greek mercenaries. It was only a matter of time before Greek economic and military superiority came into operation, and the final result was never in doubt.

After the collapse of the Old Persian military resistance in 329 B.C., the Macedonian and Greek troops of Alexander arrived at the River Syr Darya, the frontier between the sedentary and the nomadic civilizations. The encounter of the Greeks with the Iranian nomads of Central Asia was of decisive importance for future developments. The Greeks brought a well-developed urban culture, with a great tradition of handicrafts and arts, a rich literature and many religious cults. They had a new art of warfare, an efficient system of land-ownership for city-states, a developed commodity production and money economy, and they were interested in long-distance trade. All these elements of Greek culture made a strong impact on the Iranians living inside the former Persian Empire, and exercised considerable influence on the nomads.

When the Seleucid Empire disintegrated, the formation of a syncretic Graeco-Iranian culture intensified. In Parthia, the nomadic tribe of the Iranian Parni became masters of a slightly Hellenized land. They retained many elements from their nomadic culture, particularly in military organization, but adopted both key elements of Old Persian tradition (such as the royal chancelleries) and the most important achievements of Hellenism. It was not accidental that many Parthian kings incorporated 'Philhellene' in their titles and that Greek dramas were performed at their court.

In Graeco-Bactria the Greek ethnic element was more numerous than in other Iranian countries and the impact of Greek culture was more effective. Greek cities were built where Greek arts and handicrafts flourished, and the forms of Greek religious cults were adopted even by many Iranians. Greek language and literacy was widespread and the Greek theatre stimulated Indian dramatic art. Due to the landed-property area (*chora*) of the Greek

cities, the system of double landownership came into being in both Parthia and Bactria. The supreme proprietor of the land was the king, while the village communities of half-free peasants, who cultivated the fields, were only secondary landowners. Beside the royal land, there were also landed-property areas of the Greek cities and sanctuaries. These three categories of landed property were adopted by other countries of Central Asia. Perhaps the most important effect produced by Hellenism, however, was the large-scale development of long-distance trade. The Graeco-Bactrian kings led military expeditions to the Phryni and Seres to secure trading contacts with China, and for the first time an exchange of material goods and culture between East and West across Central Asia became possible. The rise of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom as a Central Asian power upgraded the importance of the region.

The impact of urban development was also felt in the Tarim basin. The wide deserts of this region were unsuitable for nomadic horse-breeding but agriculture was possible in the oases along the rivers. The population at that time consisted of diverse Saka tribes. The nomadic Yüeh-chih tribal confederation controlled the vast territory from the Altai mountains to the Huang-ho and held sway over the Hsiung-nu tribes living to the east. Between 203 and 177/76 B.C., however, the Hsiung-nu defeated the Yüeh-chih tribes, who migrated to the west, to the region of the Ili, Chu and Naryn rivers.

Urbanization in the Tarim basin had begun in the third century B.C. when the population still consisted of Saka tribes, as is proved by the evidence of place-names that are exclusively of Saka origin. But the Saka population was driven towards the west, and the eastern part of the Tarim basin was occupied by an Indo-European people speaking centum-language. At an earlier stage they may have belonged to the Yüeh-chih confederation, as this would explain the name ‘four Tuyrak’ for Qarashahr, Kocho and Bishbaliq.

Both the ancient Saka population and the later Indo-European immigrants continued to develop cities and formed small city-states in Kashgar, Yarkand, Khotan, Kucha, Qarashahr and Lou-lan. The wealth and prosperity of the petty kingdoms in the Tarim basin from agriculture, handicrafts and transit trade aroused the interest of the Hsiung-nu, who took over the territory.

The Hsiung-nu confederation consisted of twenty-four tribes, controlling a nomadic empire with a strong military organization. They were excellent stock-breeders but they were well acquainted with agriculture and had several permanent fortified settlements where handicrafts flourished. Their economy made use of the forests to provide fodder for their animals and raw material for handicrafts. Their royal tribes and kings (*shan-yü*) bore Iranian names and all the Hsiung-nu words noted by the Chinese can be explained

from an Iranian language of Saka type. It is therefore clear that the majority of Hsiung-nu tribes spoke an Eastern Iranian language.

While the Hsiung-nu ruled the Tarim basin and the trading routes leading across it, the Yüeh-chih (known as Tochari in Greek and Latin sources) invaded Bactria between 133 and 129 B.C. This move of the Yüeh-chih was occasioned by the aggression of the Wu-sun (Asiani in classical sources), a nomadic Iranian people under Hsiung-nu sovereignty. It also set in motion the Saka tribes again. After several successful wars against the Parthians, the western branch of the Sakas settled in Sistan where a Saka kingdom was established. About the same time, the Sakas using the Karakorum route established a Saka kingdom in Gandhāra. They eventually conquered Mathura and, advancing south, later became masters of Surashtra and Malwa.

The Sakas quickly abandoned their nomadic way of life and adapted themselves to local social and economic customs. They adopted many elements of Parthian, Greek and Indian cultures and became Hellenized or Indianized. They issued coins modelled on the Graeco-Bactrian coinage, took part in the worship of their Indian subjects and patronized both Brahmanic sanctuaries and Buddhist monasteries. But they retained their armaments and art of warfare – the deployment of armoured cavalry which began to spread from them throughout the ancient world.

In Bactria the Yüeh-chih (Tochari) remained to the north of the River Amu Darya, and lived in a confederation of five tribes, headed by a *yabghu*. One of them was the Kushan tribe who played an important role later. The Kushan *yabghu* settled in the Surkhan Darya valley where his residence might have been at Khalchayan. Finds excavated there reveal a syncretic culture, uniting their former nomadic civilization with Parthian and Hellenistic elements. The Kushans in northern Bactria controlled the starting point and an important section of the Silk Route as well as the crossing places on the Amu Darya. They benefited from the transit trade and kept away from the struggle between the Chinese and the Hsiung-nu. After more than a century they were able to extend their hegemony over the other four Yüeh-chih tribes and when the Indo-Parthian kingdom of Gondophares declined and Parthia was preoccupied in internal strife, they occupied southern Bactria and Gandhāra in the mid-first century A.D.

The organization of the Kushan Empire must be attributed to Kujula Kadphises (*c.* A.D. 50–100). On his first coin issues he had the title *yavuga* (*yabghu*), but after his great conquests he assumed the titles of *mahārāja* (Great King), *rājatirāja* (King of Kings) and *devaputra* (Son of God), claiming equality with the Indian, Parthian and Chinese sovereigns. He was succeeded by Vima Kadphises (*c.* A.D. 101–133), Kanishka I (A.D. 134–156), Vasishka (A.D. 157 to *c.* 164), Kanishka II (*c.* A.D. 158–176), Huvishka I (*c.* A.D.

158–182), Huvishka II (*c.* A.D. 183–193) and Vāsudeva I (*c.* A.D. 194–233) who became known as 'Great Kushan' in historiography. The two Kadphises still used the Eucratides era, beginning around 166 B.C., and the Old Saka era, beginning about 66 B.C. respectively; but Kanishka introduced his own era, beginning in A.D. 134, which was also used by other Great Kushans.

The period of the Great Kushans (*c.* A.D. 50 to *c.* 233) was the golden age of ancient Central Asia. They substantially enlarged their territory, led successful expeditions as far as Pāṭaliputra, conquered India up to Kauśambi, controlled the most important ports on the western coast of India, and were masters of the area up to K'ang in the north and to the Tarim basin in the north-east. Their territories covered all the trading routes on which Chinese goods (silk and other textiles, spices, precious stones and metal wares) brought across the Tarim basin could be transported onwards to Parthia, Egypt, Europe and the Roman Empire; and they could consequently control the whole East–West trade crossing Central Asia.

The Kushans made no serious attempt to conquer the Tarim basin, even during periods when the Chinese withdrew their garrisons, though Kushan political, economic and cultural influence was considerable in the city-states of the region. The Chinese had extended their control over the Tarim basin between 108 and 65 B.C. to protect caravans, travelling on the Silk Route from China, against robbery by the Hsiung-nu. They stationed garrison troops in some strategic cities and tried to install kings loyal to the Celestial Empire and to control the nomination of principal officers, imposing on them the rules of Chinese protocol in diplomatic contact. Otherwise local administration, customs, social and economic structure remained untouched by Chinese influence. Kushan culture, at its zenith at that time but not associated with foreign political oppression, made a greater impact.

The prosperity of the Kushan Empire was based upon its highly developed agriculture. The Kushan kings made great efforts to secure a good water supply, to improve and extend irrigation systems and to enlarge cultivated territory. The extent of irrigated fields was even greater than today and agricultural techniques were improved. It was the period when the wooden plough with an iron ploughshare first appeared in Central Asia.

The growth of agricultural production accelerated the process of urbanization. Many new cities arose surrounded by landed-property districts. They had a Hellenistic character with a quadrangular ground-plan and massive adobe walls. In them great dwelling houses, sanctuaries and palaces, barracks, arsenals and royal treasuries were constructed. Urbanization promoted and required the development of arts and handicrafts. In the Kushan cities architecture, sculpture and painting, textile art and manufacture, metallurgy, pottery, metal

work, jewellery, the manufacture of harness and arms and hydraulic engineering became highly developed.

The prosperity of handicraft production laid the basis for an intensive exchange of goods both internally and abroad. Vima Kadphises introduced a new monetary system with a standard gold dinar designed for foreign trade and a range of copper denominations for internal use.

The Kushans benefited substantially from trade with China, and controlled all the routes by which Chinese silk and other wares could be transported to the West. The Silk Route had one branch leading across Karakorum to Gandhāra and the ports of western India. The main route ended in the Vakhsh valley from where one branch led to southern Bactria, another through Merv to Parthia and a third to the Caspian and Transcaucasia. Roman and Chinese coins, Egyptian and Syrian paste and glass articles, Chinese mirrors and east Mediterranean ceramics from excavations in Kushan Central Asia provide telling evidence for the lively trade on the Silk Route and its branches.

Kushan state administration, based on royal officers and chancelleries, had its antecedents in the Old Persian Empire and in Greek Bactria. Under the Achaemenids the royal chancelleries used Aramaic; the Graeco-Bactrian administration retained Aramaic, but also introduced Greek. At first, the Kushan kings retained Greek but also introduced Gāndhārī Prakrit. Under Vima Kadphises a writing system for the Bactrian language using the Greek alphabet was created and Bactrian became one of the official languages of the administration. It has recently become clear that the Kushans had a third writing system using Kharoṣṭhī script for their own language. Two of the three official languages (Bactrian and Gāndhārī) were extensively used for Buddhist literature.

The creation of new writing systems for several languages bears witness to Kushan intellectual life. On its territory several peoples, languages and religions mutually influenced and enriched one another. The pantheon on the Kushan coins, with gods of pre-Zoroastrian, Zoroastrian, Greek, Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Indian origin, clearly reflects the syncretic character of Kushan culture. But from the historical point of view most important is the role played by the Kushan king Kanishka II (Candana Kanishka) in the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia. He convened the Buddhist synod of the Sarvāstivāda school in Kashmir which compiled the *Jñānaprasthānam* and entrusted Aśvaghoṣa, the famous Indian poet, with providing for the correct Sanskrit language form of the commentary written by Kātyāyana. After the synod, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit replaced Gāndhārī Prakrit as the literary language of Buddhism and in this development the role of Kanishka II was decisive. The Kushan Empire also played an important role in the spread of Buddhism in the Tarim basin. Buddhist religious teaching had already appeared in Bactria as early

as the third century B.C. Later, under Kushan rule, many Indian merchants and craftsmen migrated into the Kushan cities of Central Asia. Buddhist missionaries followed them and many Buddhist religious centres were established.

At first the Mahāsāṅghika school advanced to northern Bactria and from there to Khotan and other cities of the Tarim basin, bringing Gāndhārī Prakrit and the Kharoṣṭhī script, which became the official language and script of the Kushan administration and were also adopted in the kingdom of Lou-lan. The Buddhist mission also arrived in the Tarim basin on the Karakorum route and brought along a different variant of Gāndhārī Prakrit. By the middle of the first century A.D., Buddhism had already arrived in China, and the earliest translations into Chinese of Buddhist works were made from Gāndhārī Prakrit. Later, the Sarvāstivāda school, using Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and Brāhmī script, eclipsed the Mahāsāṅghika school in Central Asia. An important role in its success was played by Aśvaghoṣa whose works were also translated into Chinese.

While the second century represented a golden age there was a radical change in Central Asia in the third century. When the delegation of Po-t'iao (Vāsudeva I) arrived at the court of the Wei dynasty in A.D. 230, the Kushans still possessed Chi-pin (Gandhāra), Ta-hsia (Bactria), Kao-fu (Kabul) and T'ien-chu (India) but the conditions for East–West trade were no longer favourable.

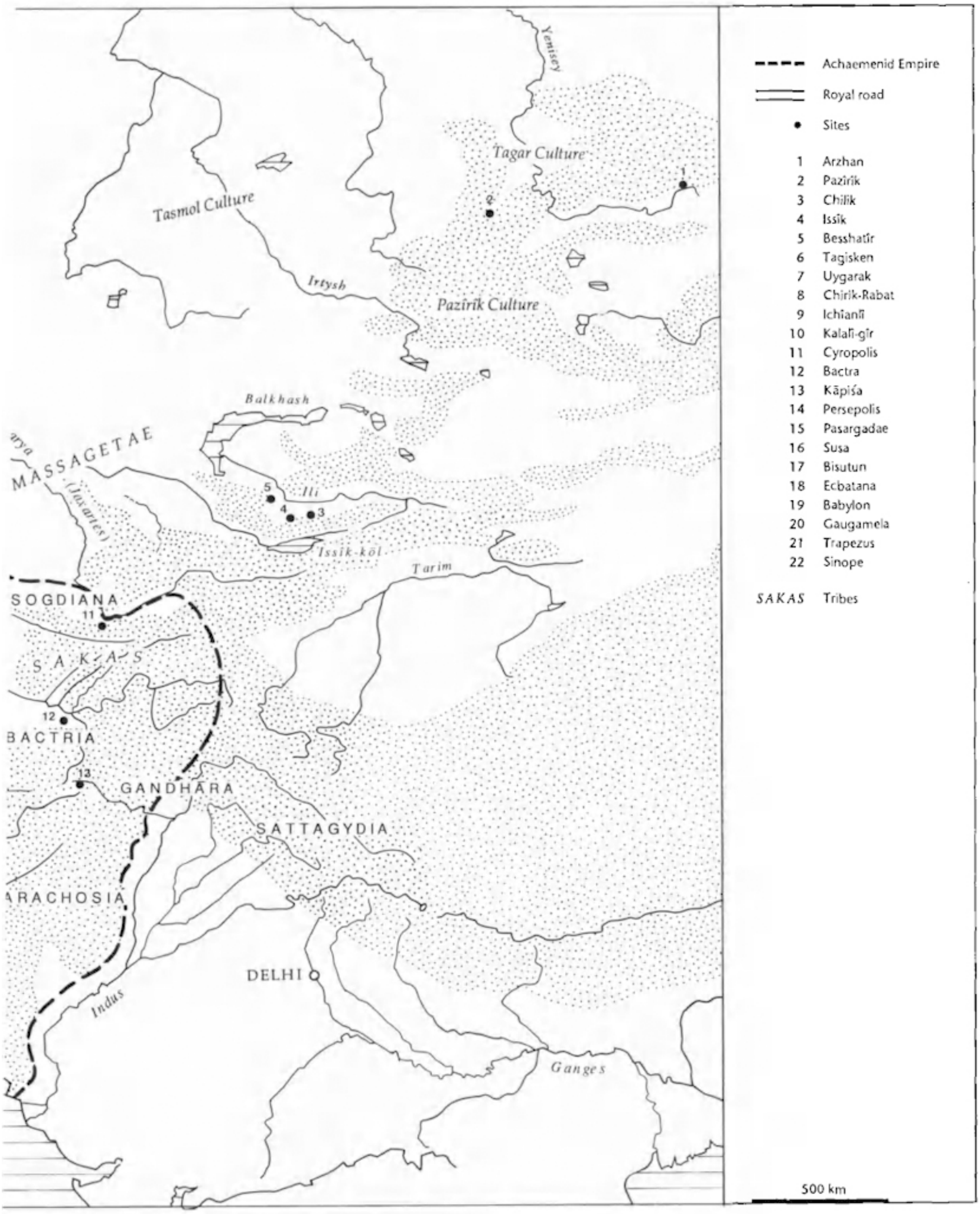
In A.D. 220, the Han Empire fell and its administration collapsed. Parthia suffered from the war against Rome and the dynastic struggle there led to the rise of the Sasanians in A.D. 224. North of the Syr Darya loss of control over the Silk Route across Sogdiana seriously affected the economic and political position of the Kushans. Although the Indian provinces of their empire remained unaffected by these problems, the Kushans now faced a new powerful enemy in Sasanian Iran.

The disintegration of the Kushan Empire happened very quickly. Vāsudeva I's kingdom was divided between Vāsudeva II, ruling in Bactria, and Kanishka III, reigning in Gandhāra and Mathura. At this historical moment, Ardashir I, the Sasanian king, invaded the Kushan Empire and took Balkh. Unable to offer serious resistance, Vāsudeva II acknowledged Persian supremacy and his kingdom became Kushanshahr, one of the vassal states of Sasanian Iran. The eastern part of the former Kushan Empire preserved its independence, and its king, Kanishka III, introduced a new era, the Late Kushan era, beginning in A.D. 234, which survived in use up to the ninth century A.D. This collapse of the Kushan Empire created a new situation. The central power that had controlled East–West trade was now missing and the reorganization of long-distance trade between China and the Mediterranean only became possible a century later.

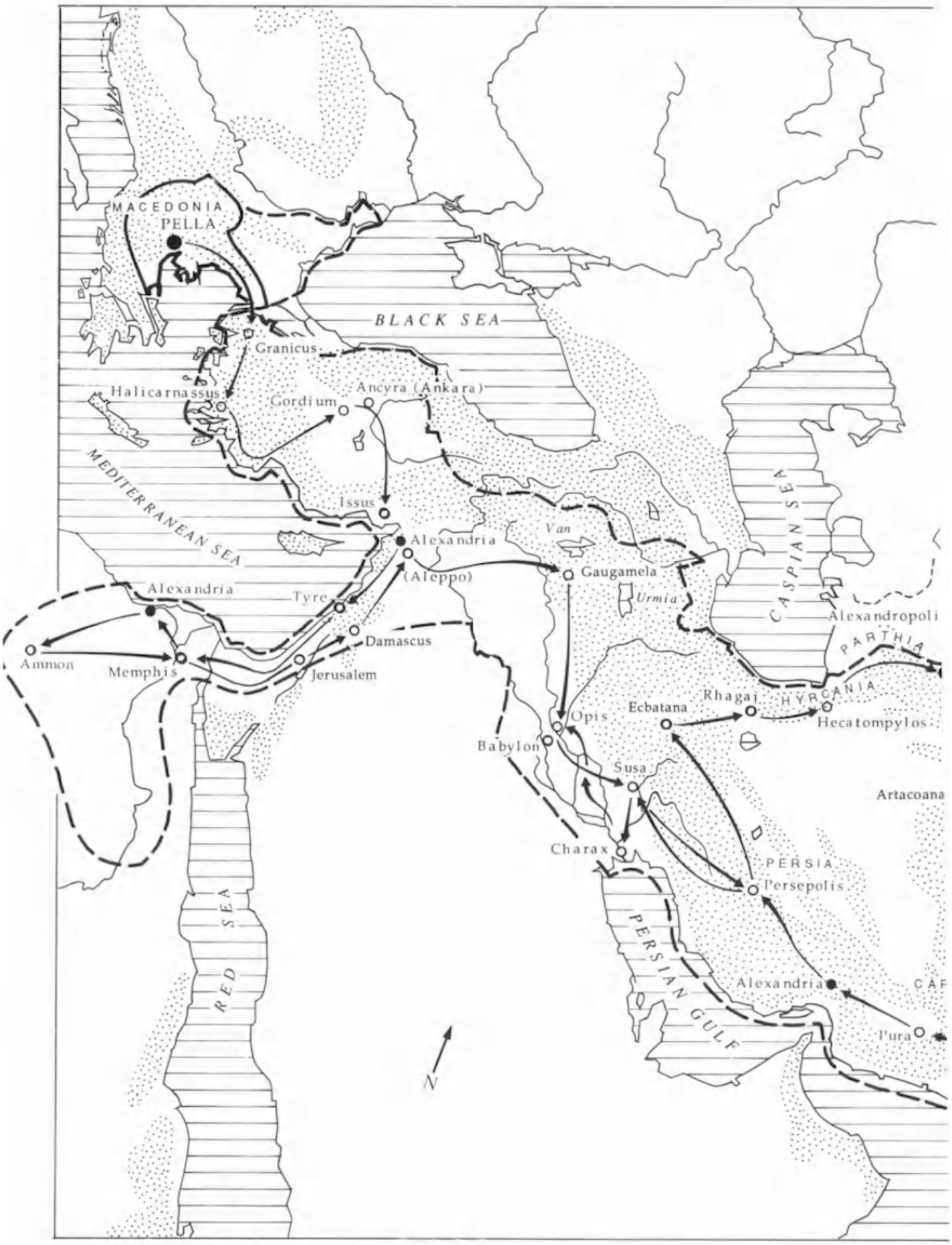
MAPS



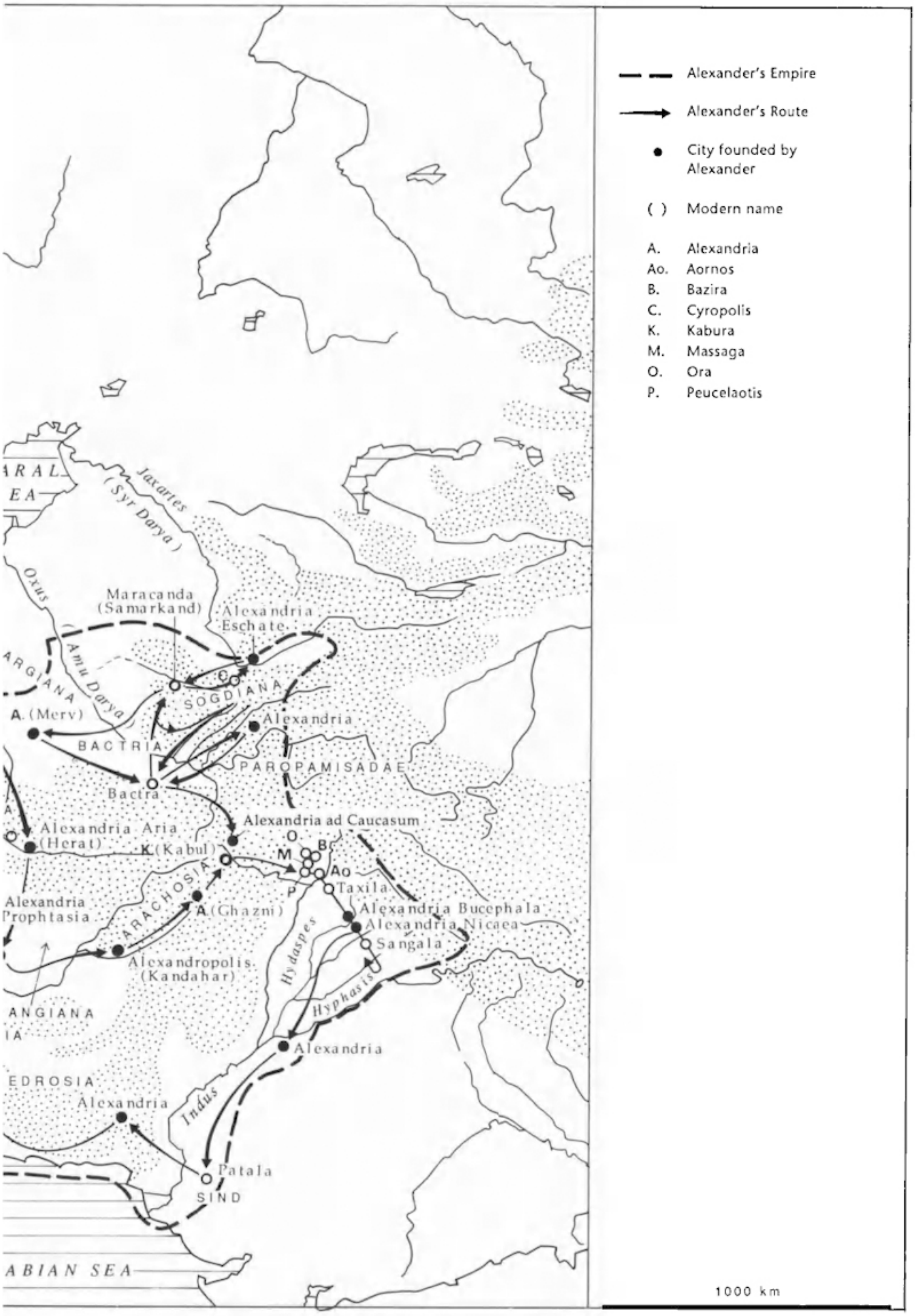
MAP 1a. The Achaemenid Empire and the Iranian nomadic tribes of Central Asia.



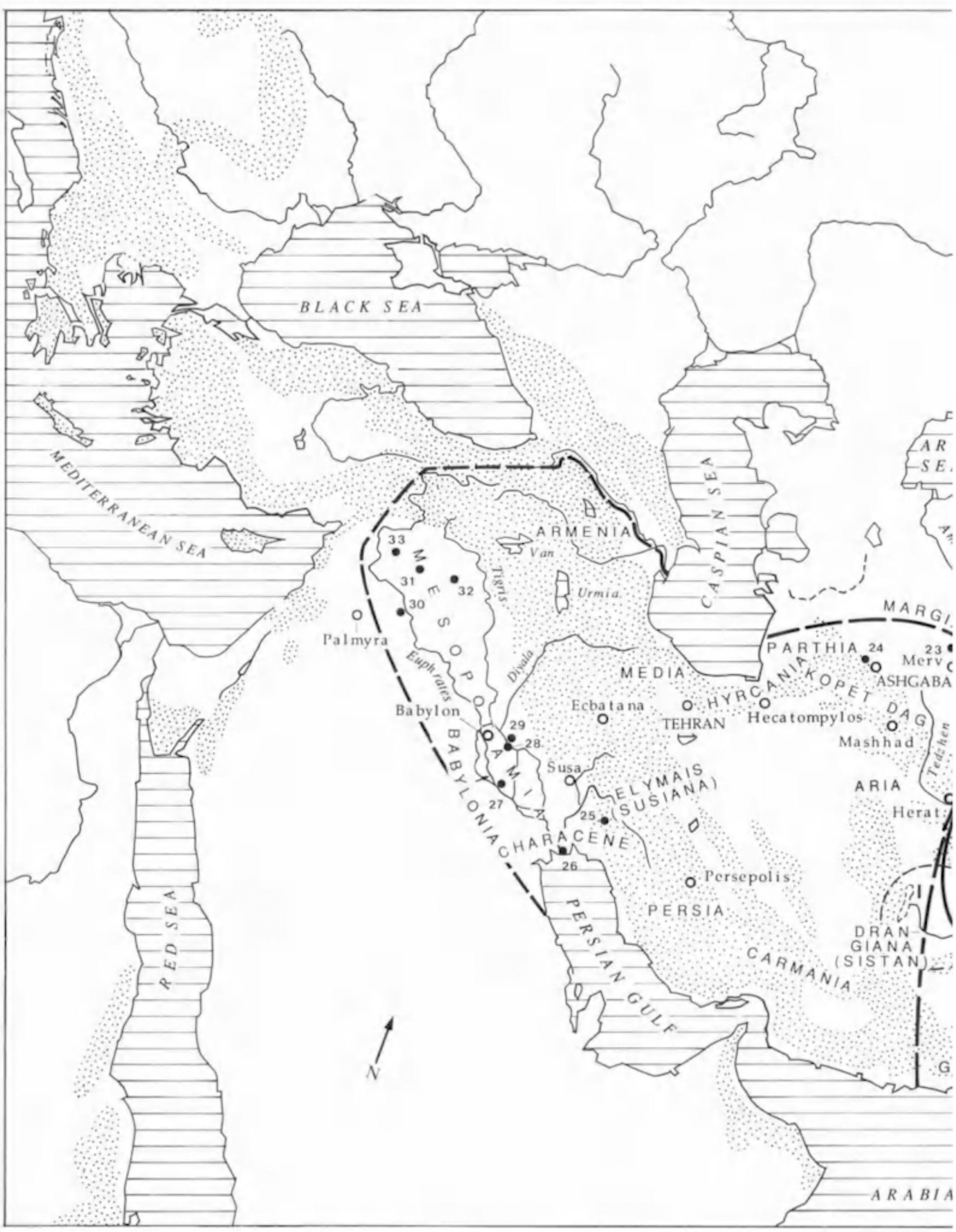
MAP 1b. (*Continued.*)



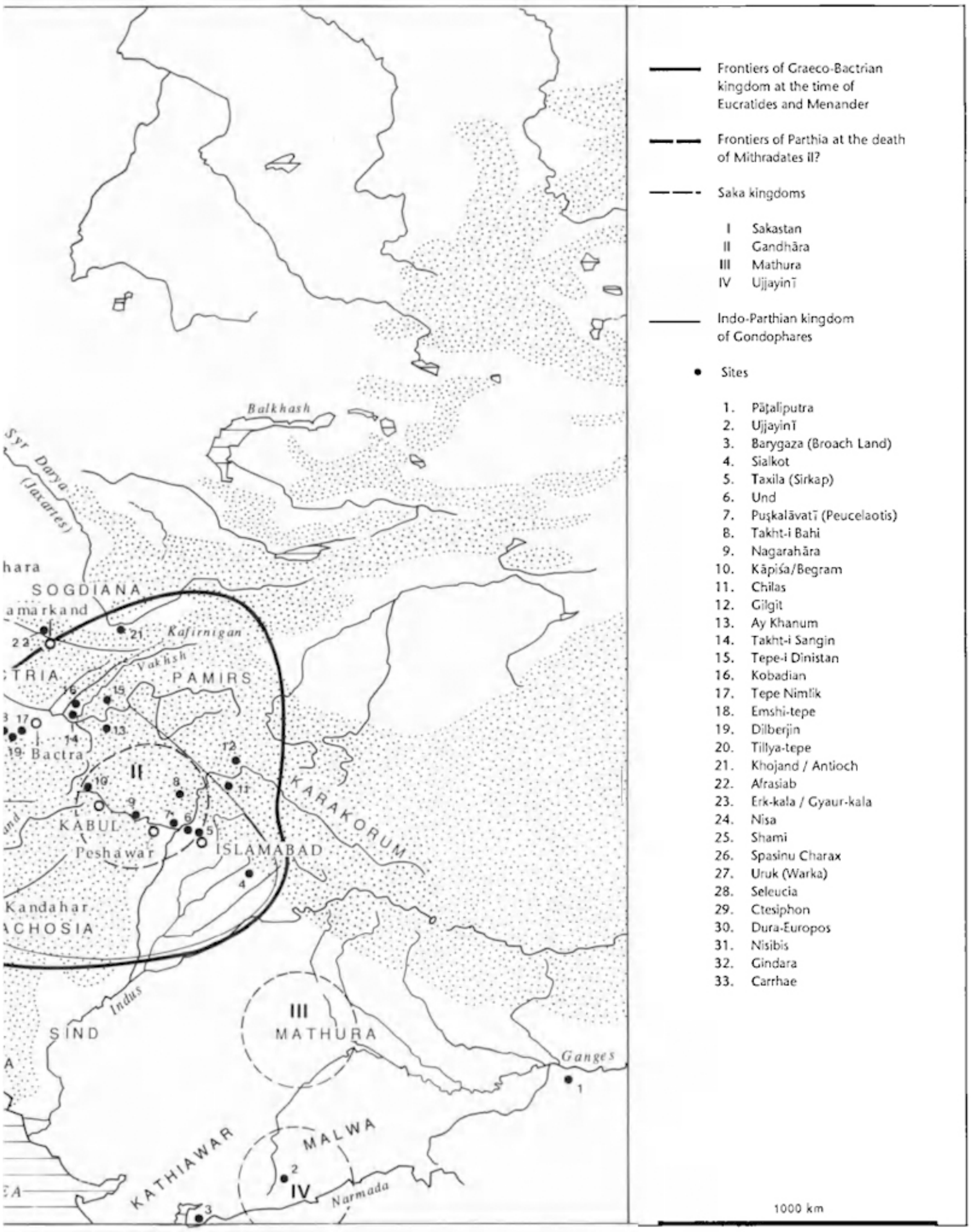
MAP 2a. The campaigns of Alexander the Great in Central Asia.



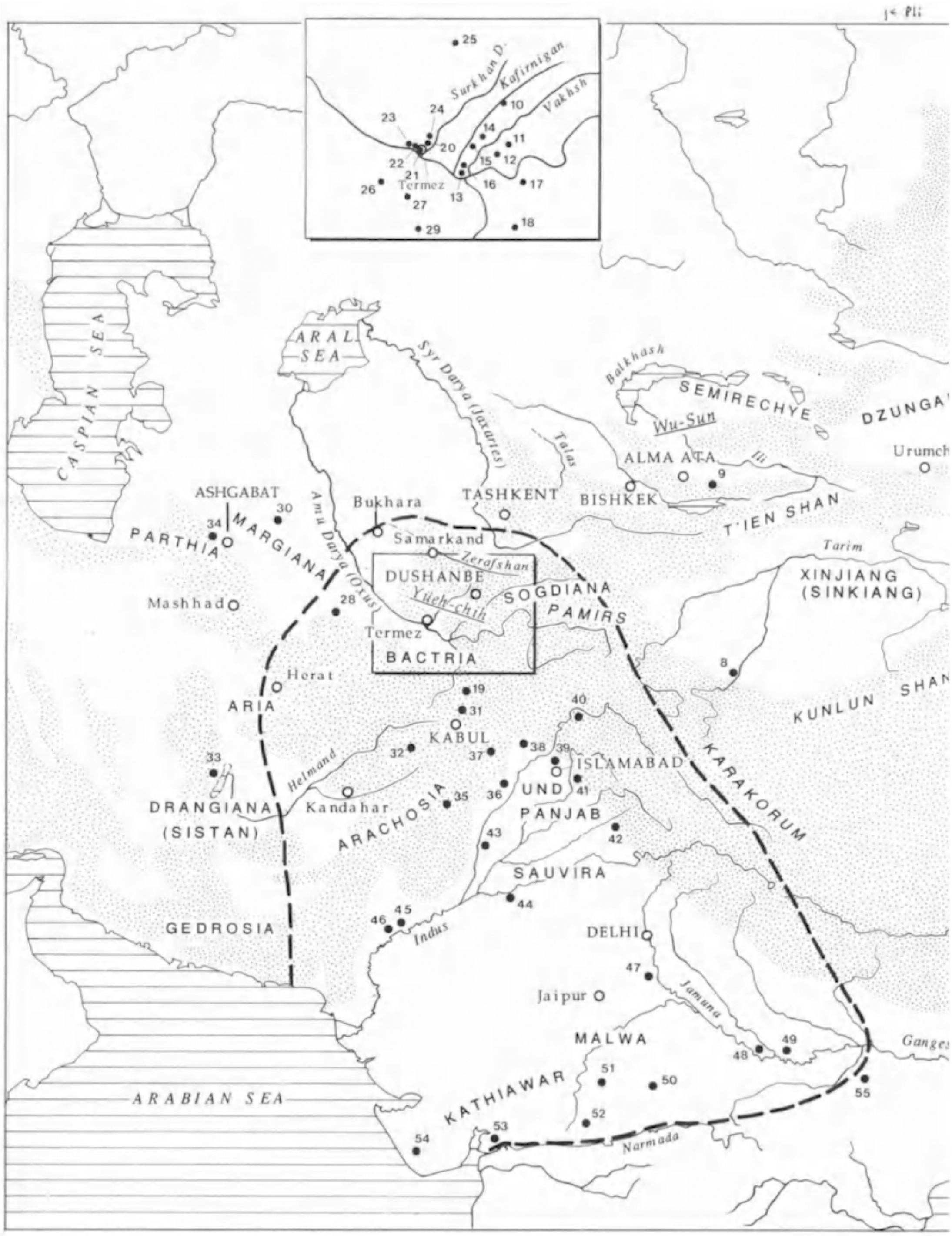
MAP 2b. (*Continued.*)



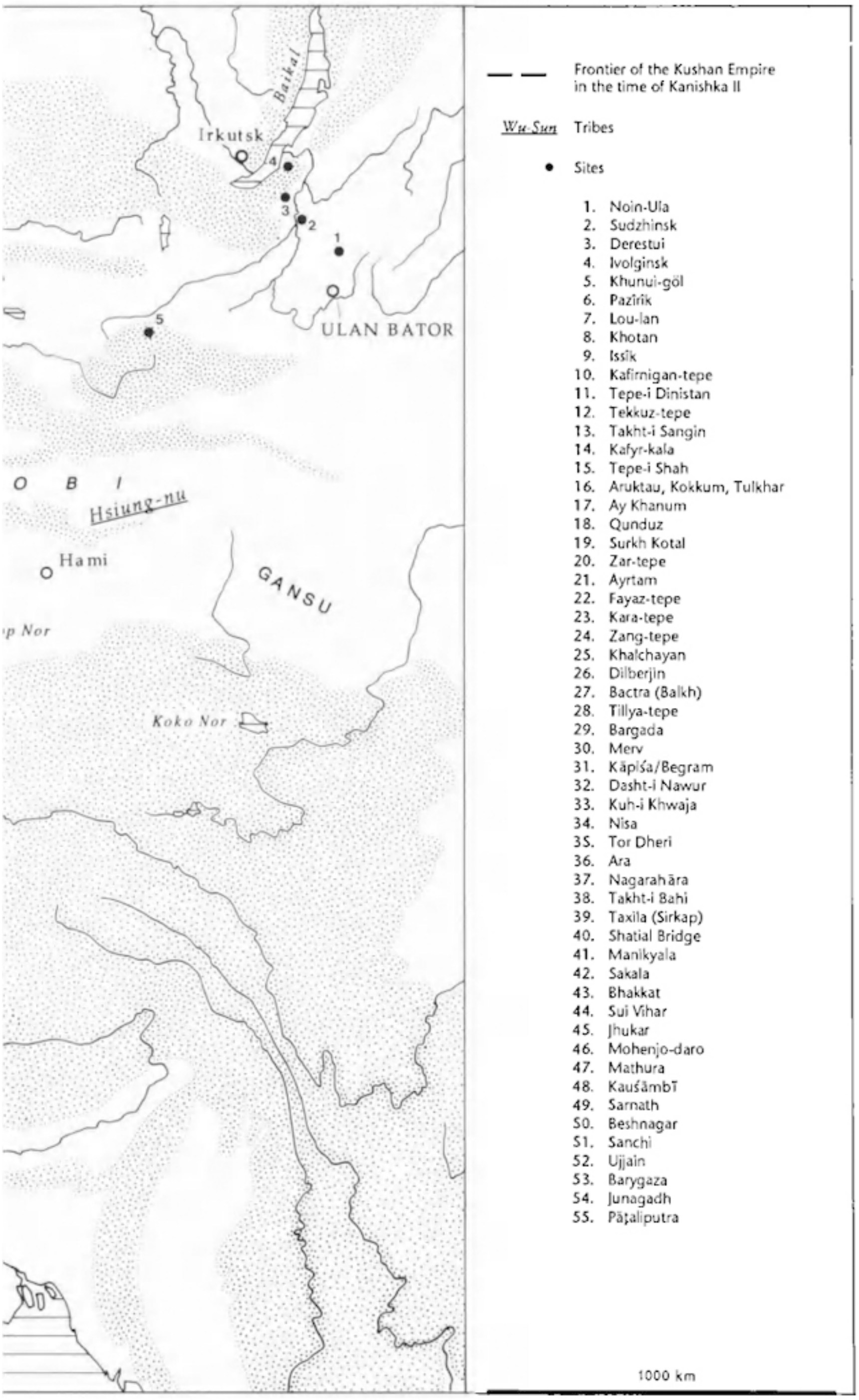
MAP 3a. Parthia, Graeco-Bactria, Indo-Parthia and the Saka kingdoms.



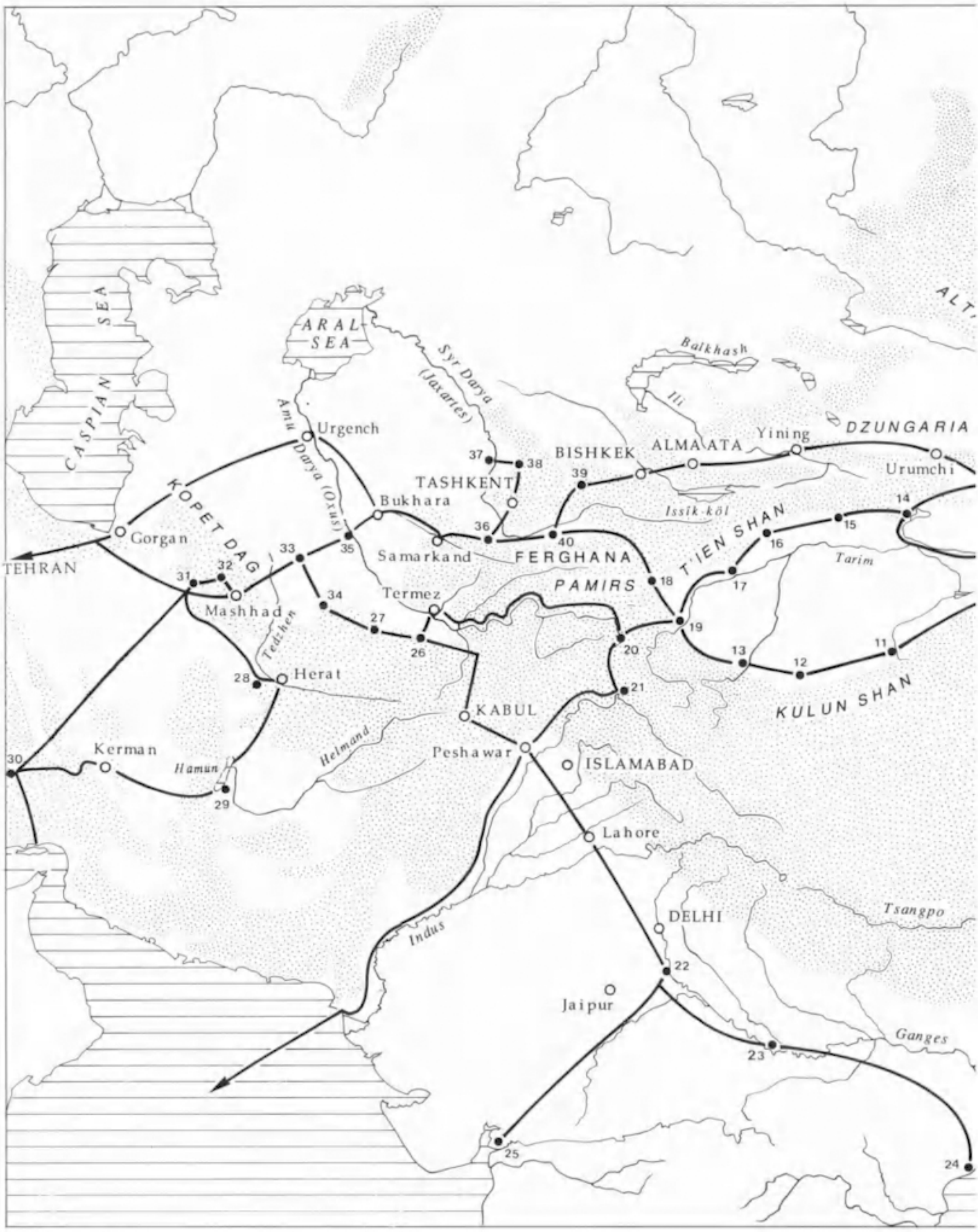
MAP 3b. (*Continued.*)



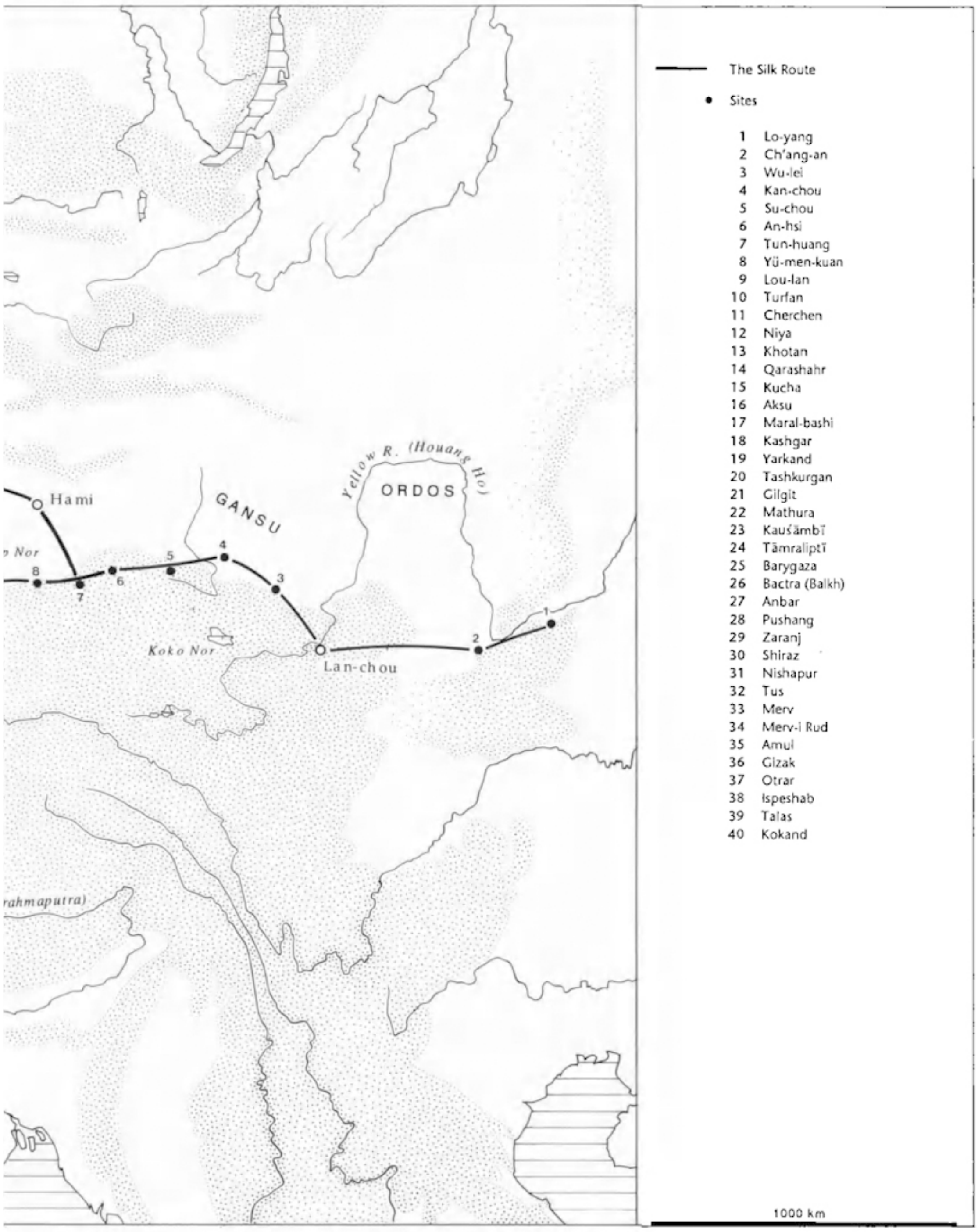
MAP 4a. The Hsiung-nu, the Yüeh-chih and the Kushan kingdom.



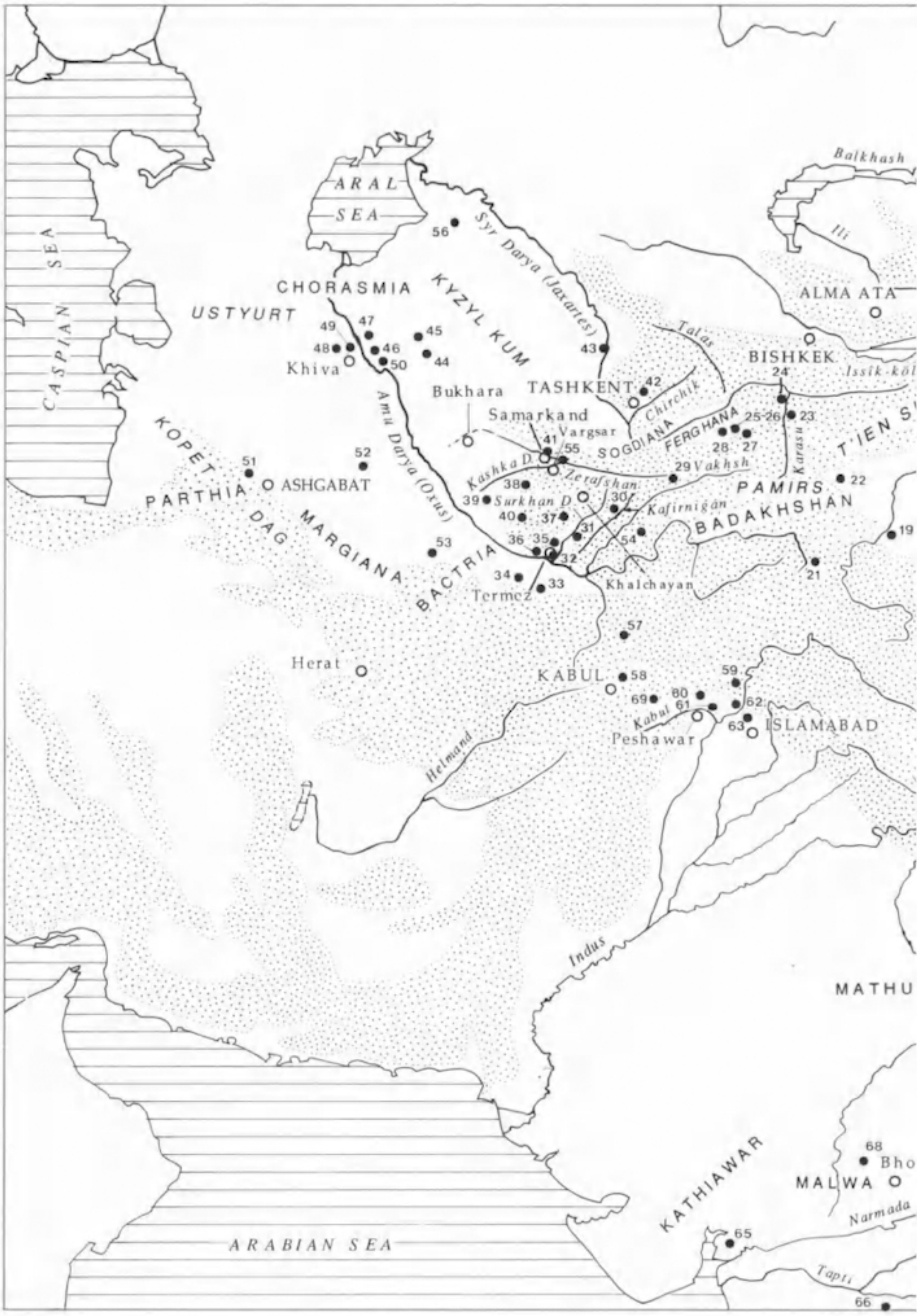
MAP 4b. (*Continued.*)



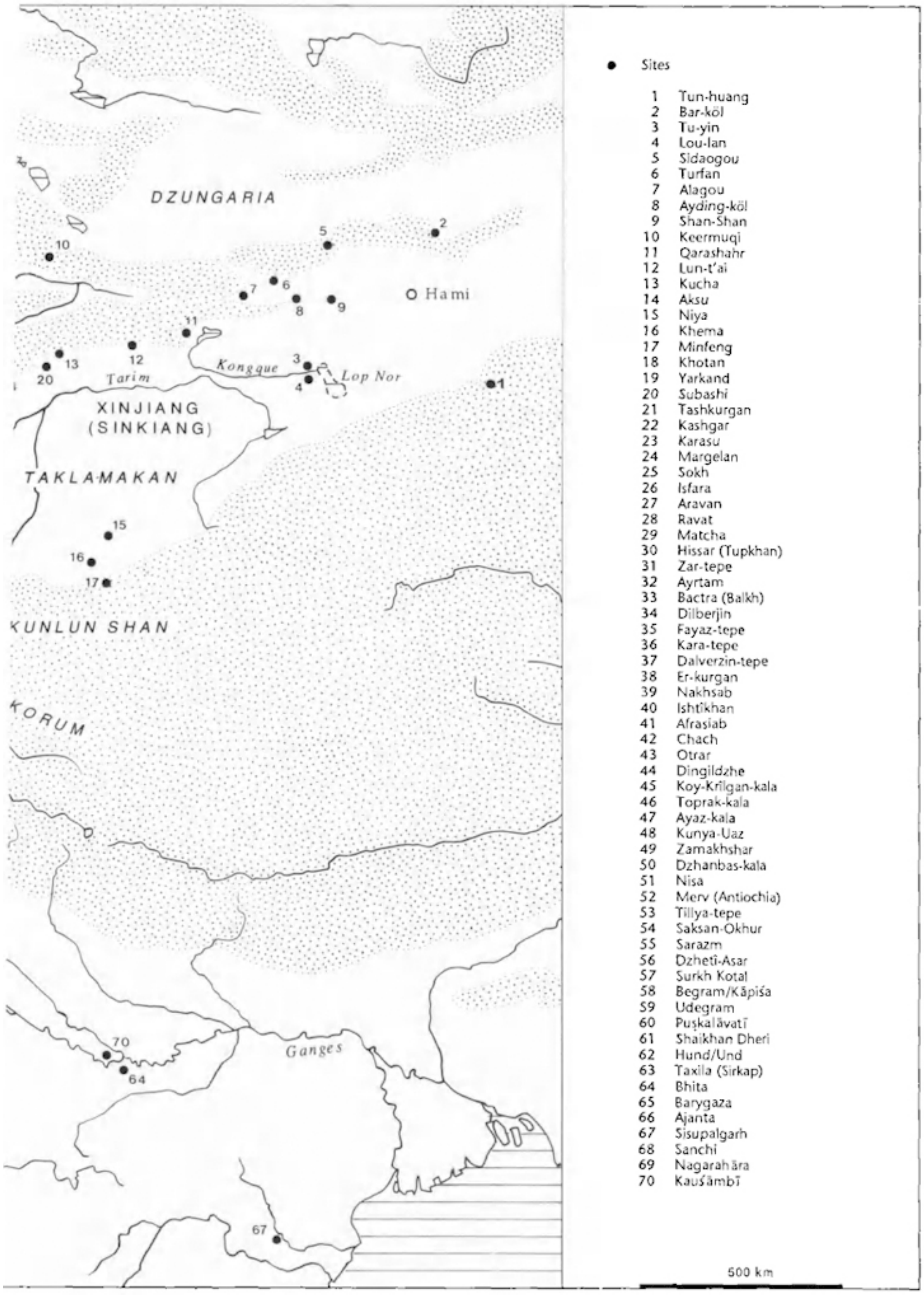
MAP 5a. The Silk Route.



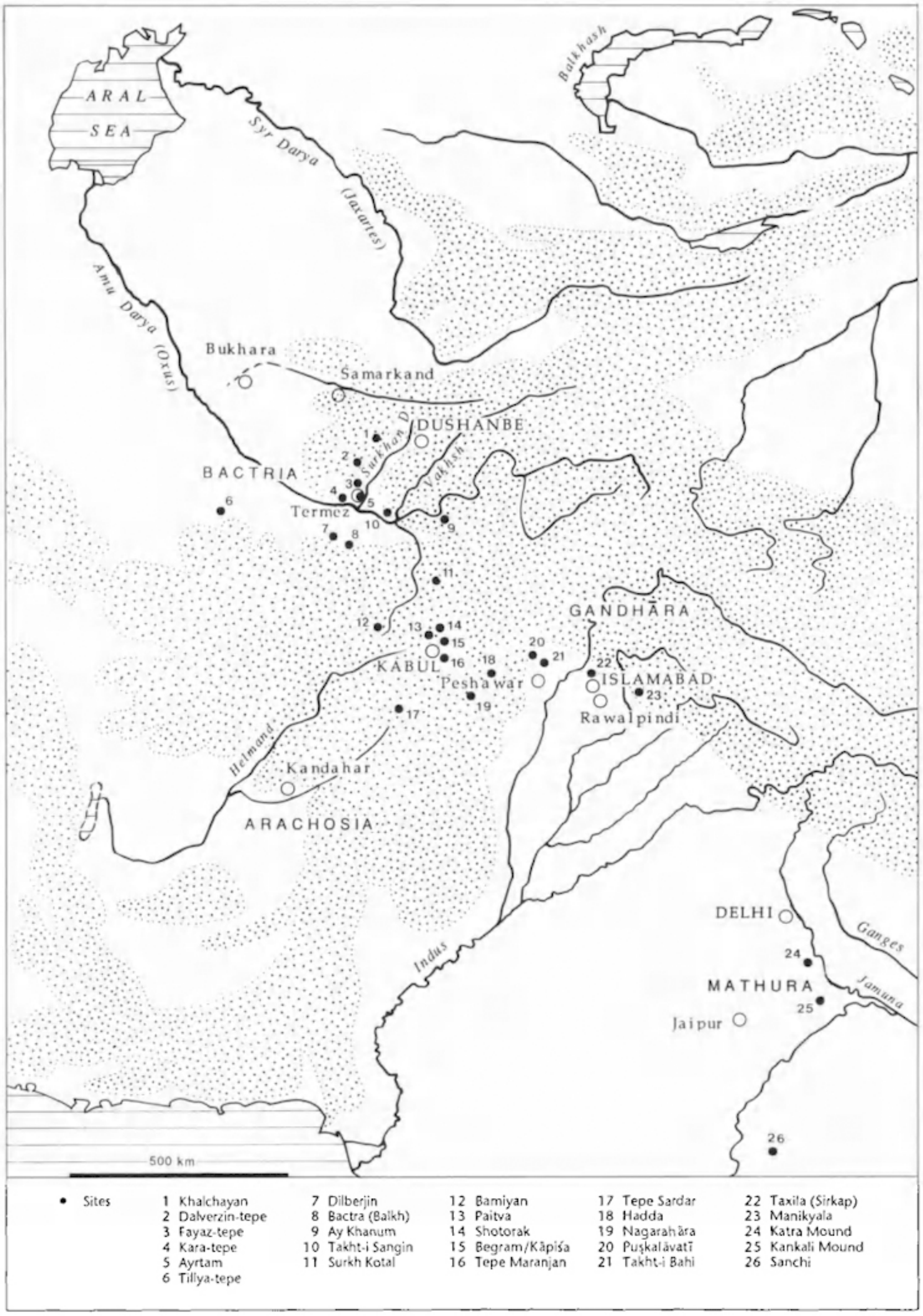
MAP 5b. (*Continued.*)



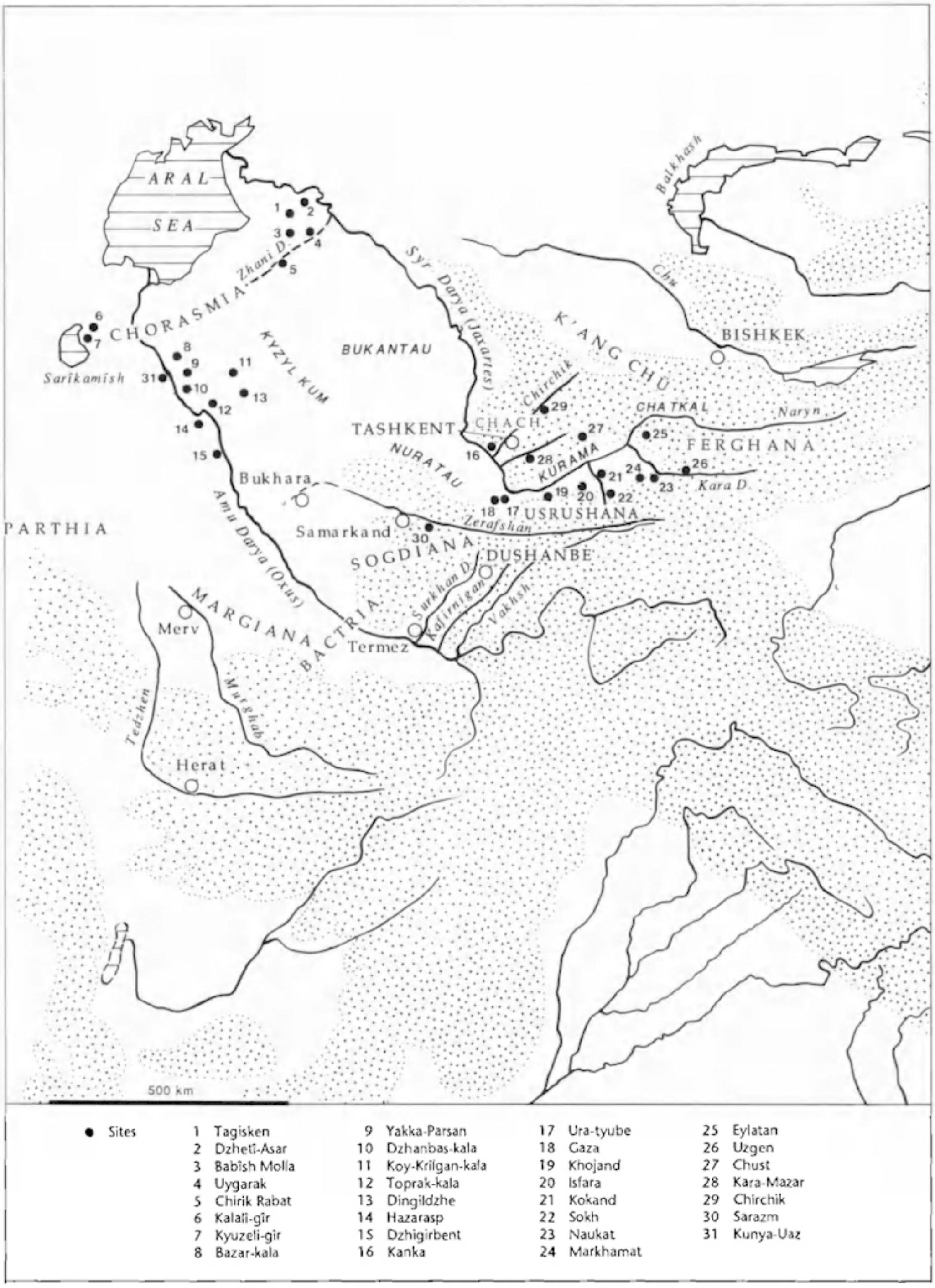
MAP 6a. The nomadic and urban cultures in Central Asia.



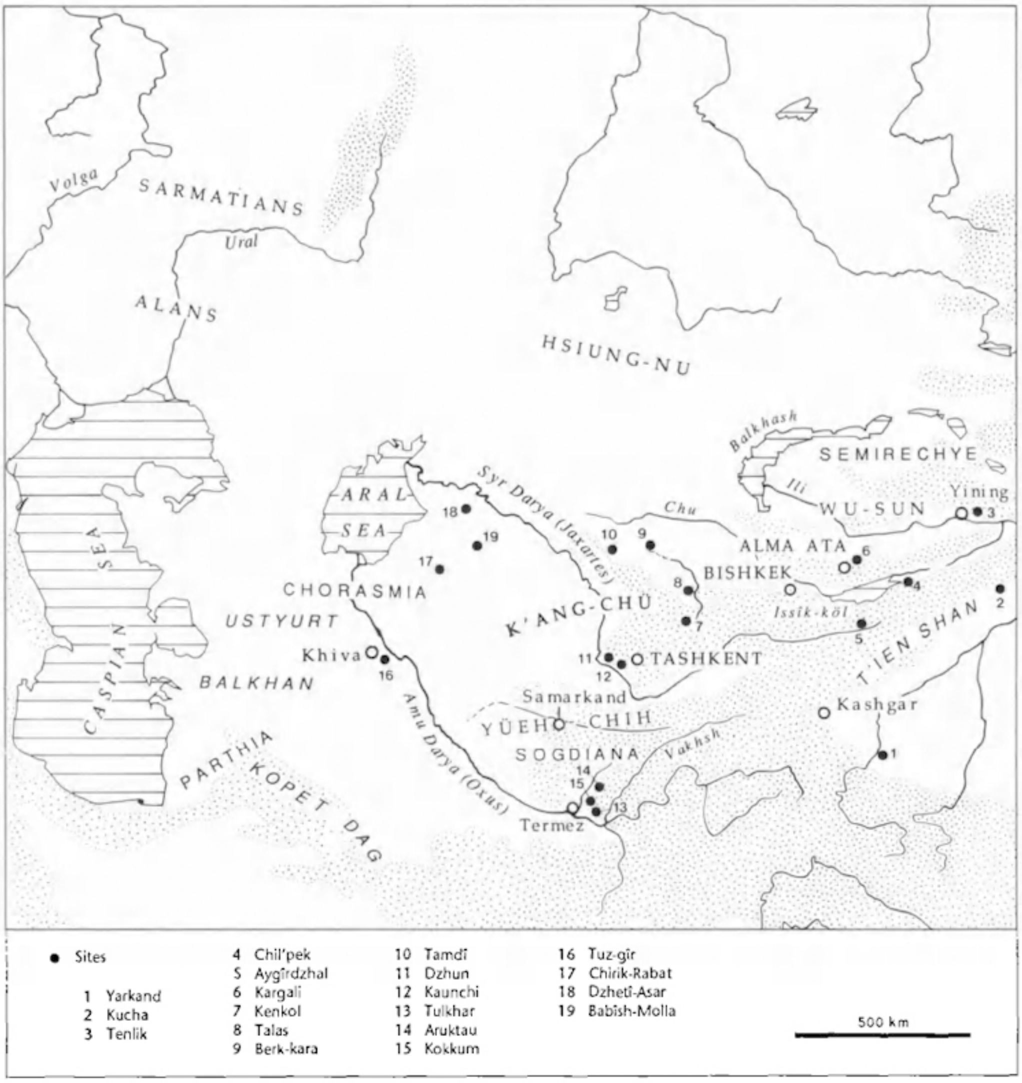
MAP 6b. (*Continued.*)



MAP 7. Sites of Kushan art.



MAP 8. States in north-western Central Asia.



MAP 9. The nomads of northern Central Asia after the invasion of Alexander.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

ABBREVIATIONS OF PERIODICALS

AA = *Arts asiatiques,* Paris
AAH = *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae,* Budapest
Acta Ant. Hung. = *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae,* Budapest
AM = *Asia Major,* London
AO = *Arkheologicheskie otkîtiya,* Moscow
AOH = *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae,* Budapest
AP = *Ancient Pakistan,* Peshawar
ART = *Arkheologicheskie rabotî u Tadzhikistane,* Dushanbe
AS = *Afghan Studies,* Kabul
ASIAR = *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report,* New Delhi
BCH = *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique,* Paris
BEFEO = *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrĕme-Orient,* Paris
BSOAS = *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,* London
CAH = *The Cambridge Ancient History,* Cambridge
CHM = *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale/Journal of World History,* Neycgĕtel
CII = *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum,* Calcutta
CRAI = *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles lettres,* Paris
EI = *Epigraphia Indica,* New Delhi
EV = *Epigrafika Vostoka,* Moscow/Leningrad
EW = *East and West,* Rome
IANTSSR = *Izvestiya Akademii nauk TSSR,* Ashkhabad
IIA = *Institut po izucheniyu arkheologii*
IIJ = *Indo-Iranian Journal,* The Hague
IMKU = *Istoriya material'noy kul'turî Uzbekistana,* Tashkent
IOON Tadzh. SSR = *Izvestiya Otdeleniya obshchestvennîkh nauk Akademii nauk Tadzhikskoy SSR,* Dushanbe
IsMEO.R.M. = *Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente. Reports and Memoirs,* Rome
JA = *Journal asiatique,* Paris
JAOS = *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* New Haven, Conn.

JBBRAS = *Journal of the Bengal Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*

JCA = *Journal of Central Asia, Islamabad*

JNSI = *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India,* Varanasi

JRAS = *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* London

KhAEE = *Khorezmskiye arkheologo-ĕtnograficheskiye ĕkspeditsii,* Moscow

KSIA = *Kratkie soobshcheniya Instituta arkheologii,* Kiev

KSIIMK = *Kratkie soobshcheniya Instituta Istorii material'noy kul'turî,* Moscow

MAIKTSA = *Mezhdunarodnaya assotsiatsiya po izucheniyu Kul'tur Tsentral'noy Azii*

MDAFA = *Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan,* Paris

MDAFI = *Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Iran,* Paris

ME = *Materialî po ĕtnografii,* Moscow/Leningrad

MIA = *Materialî i issledovaniya po arkheologii,* Moscow/Leningrad

MIFAOC = *Mémoires de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire,* Cairo

MKhe = *Materialî Khorezmskoy ĕkspeditsii,* Moscow

MU = *Materialî Uzkomstarisa,* Tashkent

MYuTAKE = *Materialî Yuzhno-Turkmenistanskoy arkheologicheskoy kompleksnoy, ekspeditsii,* Leningrad

NC = *Numismatic Chronicle,* London

ONU = *Obshchestvennîe nauki v Uzbekistane,* Tashkent

OS = *Orientalia Suecana,* Uppsala

PIIE = *Polevîe issledovaniya Instituta ĕtnografii,* Moscow

RA = *Revue archéologique,* Paris

RN = *Revue numismatique,* Paris

SA = *Sovetskaya arkheologiya,* Moscow

SAI = *Svod arkheologicheskikh istochnikov,* Moscow/Leningrad

SE = *Sovetskaya ĕtnografiya,* Moscow/Leningrad

SNV = *Stranî i narodî Vostoka,* Moscow

TANTadzSSR = *Trudî Akademii nauk Tadzhiskoy SSR,* Dushanbe

TIIANTadzhSSR = *Trudî Instituta istorii Akademii nauk Tadzhiskoy SSR,* Dushanbe

TMKIATSAKe = *Trudî mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii po istorii arkheologii i kul'turî Tsentral'noy Azii v Kushanskuyu ĕpokhu,* Moscow

TNIIYaLI = *Tuvinskiy nauchno-issledovatel'skiy institut yazîka, literaturî i istorii,* Kyzyl

TP = *T'oung-Pao,* Leiden

TrGE = *Trudî Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha,* Leningrad

TrGIM = *Trudî Gosudarstvennogo Istoricheskogo muzeya,* Moscow

TrSAGU = *Trudî Sredneaziatskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta,* Tashkent

Trudî IIA AN Uzb. SSR = *Trudî Instituta istorii, arkheologii Akademii nauk Uzbekskoy SSR,* Tashkent

Trudî IIAE AN Turkm. SSR = *Trudî Instituta istorii i arkheologii i ĕtnografii Akademii nauk Turkmenskoy SSR,* Ashkhabad

Trudî KhAEE = *Trudî Khorezmskoy arkheologo-etnograficheskoy ekspeditsii,* Moscow

Trudî YuTAKE = *Trudî Yuzhno-Turkmenistanskoy arkheologicheskoy kompleksnoy ěkspeditsii,* Leningrad

USA = *Uspekhi Sredneaziatskoy Arkheologii,* Leningrad

VDI = *Vestnik Drevney Istorii,* Moscow

VKF AN UzSSR = *Vestnik Karakalpakskogo filiala Akademii nauk Uzbekskoy SSR*

ZDMG = *Zeitschrift der detttschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft,* Wiesbaden

ZDO = *Zemli drevnego orosheniya,* Moscow

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Cover: Head of a nomad warrior or prince (Khalchayan, first century A.D.). Painted clay. Photo: © Vladimir Terebenin.